



An Anthropology of the Irish in Belgium

Belonging, Identity
and Community in Europe

Sean O' Dubhghaill

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PREFACE

This book attempts to address the question of how communities change over time and across geographical space. What does it mean to be a community apart? How does it alter the perception of those who reside within it? Do they come to have new views on home? Who else shares these new community spaces? This work takes the Irish community in Belgium as a case study and uses the dual lenses of community and identity to explore the complex contours of Irishness and Europeaness in the twenty-first century. However, instead of taking a sterile view from a distance, this work employs the personal, situational and context-sensitive approach of anthropology to communicate how community might be better understood. This work is attentive to the issues that concern the Irish in Belgium and provides an examination of the broader claims made about how the Irish are understood at home and abroad.

To begin, while Belgium is thought to represent a great significance to the people of Ireland, through commerce, political belonging and history (Belgium is Ireland's third largest export market, valued at €18.1 bn, Ireland is a member of the European Union, headquartered in Brussels, and the historical presence of an Irish College in Leuven, to the north of Belgium and many others¹) these overlaps have not warranted a manuscript-length treatment of the Irish community in Belgium to date. There are many reasons for why this is, chief among which is the general trend of examining Irish communities in anglophone emigration trajectories (USA, UK, Australia and Canada) in Irish studies. Belgium,

therefore, represents a fairly novel fieldsite in which questions about belonging and identity might be addressed.

The risk that is run in paying insufficient attention to Belgium as an area of interest is not just the fact that it is an interesting and commonly overlooked site in its own right (See Blainey 2016), but also that it is home to a staggering amalgamation of peoples; the capital, Brussels, houses people from 179 nations.² This cosmopolitanism is also complemented by observable examples of more expected cultural fare, such as ethnically themed restaurants and, in the case of the Irish, pubs.

To that end, Belgium also represents an excellent springboard from which questions can be launched anew concerning how we view a community abroad, how travel changes or fails to change one's perception of identity, the role played by the European Union in Irish affairs, the role played by the historical connections between Ireland and Belgium as well as how people from other nationalities interact with Irishness, and how these interactions are viewed and imagined. Each of these aforementioned topics is given chapter-length examinations in this work, which only leaves us to answer the second question concerning how well anthropology is suited to a project of the kind described here.

I originally decided to work among the Irish community in order to better understand how a group of a little more than 5 million (in the Republic of Ireland) relate and work to understand the more than 70 million members of the Irish community worldwide (DFA 2017). What conditions the interaction between the 'home' community and the worldwide diaspora? What is at stake in the interaction between the two? What kind of role does the Irish language play in one's own perception of Irishness? Executing fieldwork in Brussels also allowed me to expand these questions and to situate them in the unique context of Ireland's involvement in the European Union and how it might be generalised and compared to those of other Member States.

As I mentioned previously, idly asking these questions rhetorically is one thing, but executing them in a manner that satisfied the rigours of an academic work is quite another. The role played by context is an important one to this work, and anthropology is best placed for an investigation of this kind: here I am in complete agreement with what Eric Wolf contends about anthropology, that it is 'the most humane of the sciences and the scientific of the humanities' (Wolf 1964: 88). Anthropology is an excellent medium through which to analyse the interpersonal encounters of issues such as community, identity,

language, otherness, and common and shared imaginative viewpoints. Anthropology attends to the culturally specific, the personal and the nuanced. Believing with Engelke, as he remarks in his excellent *Think Like an Anthropologist* (2017), anthropology's job is to take a common staple of our everyday experience (who we think we are, who we think we are related to and why, how we fit others into our private conceptual maps) and to re-examine it more holistically by taking many views into account. Anthropology is nothing short of a necessity in an era of echo chambering, autocratic didacts and people who think that authority is derived from talking over others, and not to or with them.

Anthropology's power resides in its emphasis on storytelling and in establishing linkages between the ongoing socio-historical processes and our day-to-day lives. We try to work from the latter back to the former, where conversations in a pub on a sunny afternoon will drift from the personal to the topical order of the day (or perhaps the other way around). Proper attention to induction is also a necessity here where researchers do not push for any particular hypothesis to be demonstrated or try to get data to fit a one-size-fits-all mould. This is beneficial because instead of honing in on one method alone, many different sources can be appealed to which take observations and contentions made in casual encounters and can make them speak to ongoing discussions in other areas of academia or popular culture; to that end, film, literature and the analyses from other social sciences and philosophy are common dialogue partners to anthropology.

Fieldwork was undertaken from the period of January 2011-May 2014 as well as a few ethnographic skirmishes undertaken thereafter in 2017 and 2018. In total, 45 people committed their time and assistance to the project by sharing their stories and experiences of life in Belgium with me and they agreed to be interviewed; their composition was broad and was quite evenly spread between the Brussels and Leuven contexts, as well as elsewhere in Belgium, and by gender. Apart from the 45 individuals, however, there were almost countless, less formal encounters with travelling artists or filmmakers, partygoers, tourists, students, people working in the EU 'bubble', Irish-language enthusiasts, hibernophiles and people who would occasionally butt into conversations in bars or caf  s to chime in (usually after hearing Irish accents) to share their views. Informed consent was given verbally at the beginning of every recorded interview.³

This work is not meant to serve as an authoritative or prescriptive guide; cultural anthropologists take a poor view of work that attempts

to convey the world as something as simple as that. Many books tout the idea that there is such a thing as a key to unlocking or seamlessly being Irish, with titles such as *How to Be Irish: Uncovering the Curiosities of Irish Behaviour* (Slattery 2011), *How to Be Irish (if you already are)* (Kelly and Rogers 1999) and many others, as well as programmatic guides illustrating how one might affect an Irish accent or mannerisms.⁴ In my work, a great deal of space has been dedicated to breaking down the various ways through which a monopoly is sought over Irish identity; these claims are often found to be profoundly insubstantial and attempt to fetishise a kind of Irishness that privileges the claims made by the 5 million far and above the interjections of the 70 million who are consigned to only emulate Irishness at a remove. Rather than having the last authorial word on the matter of Irishness abroad, though, I will constantly return to how the people with whom I spoke view their own lives in Belgium, both the positives and the negatives. However, the tumultuousness of the everyday is also figured at the grand scale of politics too, and even though it is too early to speculate on how Brexit will play out, I wish to draw attention to how it has called for a renewed attention to the unique position of the Irish in Europe.

While the magnitude of Brexit is difficult to overstate, it is also difficult to state what will happen as a result with any certainty; most accounts are informed by an ambiguity of how it will turn out exactly. However, there are a few concrete phenomena that I wish to point to that have a direct bearing on Ireland's relationship to the European Union, via the UK, and that is the possibility of a border within Ireland, the observable increase in passport applications for Irish passports from citizens of the UK with an Irish ancestor and the rehabilitated place and prominence of the Irish language. The expected departure of the UK from the European Union, or Brexit, on 31 October 2019, has certainly complicated self-understandings of Irish and European belongings, particularly as an island nation that is now separated from mainland Europe by another island nation that is no longer a part thereof. This division is also expected to be observable within Ireland itself, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; Brexit has brought a fresh spate of concerns to the fore about whether a 'hard' border will be erected in Ireland, given that borders need to be put in place between EU and non-EU countries. The so-called 'Irish border backstop', and the fierce negotiations surrounding it, would mean that Northern Ireland would be exempt from adhering to certain laws to which the Republic of

Ireland would be bound. Put otherwise, Irish people's European credentials are coming to the fore, even as people remain unsure of both what this entails and how this might prove beneficial; this can be shown with reference to the dramatic rise of applications for Irish passports by citizens of the UK, more on which below.

One cornerstone of the 'leave' Europe camp was the desire to wrest control back from an interdependent union of European Member States or to have hitherto overlooked voices have their say (Gusterson 2017). The common characterisation of 'Europe' is also interesting here, given how it was employed to refer to anonymous technocratic elites in Brussels as well as to xenophobic characterisations of immigrants [for an excellent review see Stein (2016)]. However, others who voted to 'remain' would need to find another avenue through which to maintain a connection to the EU and one common manner to do so was to seek out Irish passports. This can be observed by the fact that applications for Irish passports from the UK in 2015 were 46,000 and which rose to 86,000 in 2017.⁵ There has also been speculation that residents in Northern Ireland who have Irish passports will have more rights after the formal departure of the UK in October 2019.⁶ There is also some confusion about who is entitled to an Irish passport and who is not, something indicated in an interview with a Tory MP, West Leicestershire MP Andrew Bridgen who rhetorically commented:

We have a reciprocal agreement where I can go to Ireland and ask for an Irish passport, and someone from Ireland can come to the UK and ask for a British passport. We have that system. That's the system we have, right? (18th, October 2018).⁷

This is of course untrue, but what it points to is the confusion and mutual misunderstanding that exists.

Another confusing matter, and an unintended consequence of Brexit, was the possible downplaying or decrease in recognition of the English language as a modern European language. According to the *Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union* (or TFEU⁸), only a country's first language can be recognised by the European Union formally. With the UK gone, English will go too, in theory at least. Ireland and Malta, while anglophone countries, still recognise Irish and Maltese, respectively, in their constitutions and that is what matters to the EU. What complicates matters with the roll-out of the Irish language (it

is scheduled to leave derogation phase in 2022, a decision made long before Brexit) is that the Irish language is not spoken in Ireland very frequently outside of a classroom setting. Recent estimates indicate that it is spoken by 73,808 people daily and by 111,473 people weekly in the Republic of Ireland.⁹

The confusion brought about by Brexit notwithstanding, the examples provided above point in a clear direction and now is an excellent time to review some of the common sense understandings we have of ourselves, of change, of identity and sameness, about what it is to be European and of how difference is understood.¹⁰ Understanding how these processes are lived and intuited will allow for a broader examination of those features of everyday life that are both irreducibly unique and which are general and shared. This book attempts to take a step in this direction by employing the Irish (both at home and abroad) as a case study of all of these phenomena and by drawing upon real experiences, mediated imaginaries, and from the past.

Leuven, Belgium

Sean O' Dubhghaill

NOTES

1. Mesen peace park, mercantile partnerships, the Wild Geese, the Irish dames of Ypres at Kylemore abbey, the rectorships of Irishman Thomas Stapleton of Belgium's oldest university and others (for an exhaustive list, see MacAodha and Murray 2014).
2. 'One in three inhabitants of Brussels are not Belgian.' <https://brussels-express.eu/one-three-inhabitants-brussels-not-belgian/> Accessed 18 December 2018.
3. Hibernophile is a combination of the word Hibernia (which comes from the Greek *Iouerniā* (written Ἰουερνία) meaning Ireland) and philia, meaning the adoration or love of something.
4. See: 'What being Irish means to you' <http://www.gaelicmatters.com/being-irish-means.html>; <http://howtobeirish.blogspot.com/>; 'Speak with an Irish accent' <https://www.wikihow.com/Speak-With-an-Irish-Accent>; 'How to speak with an Irish accent.' https://www.ehow.com/how_2002845_speak-irish-accent.html; 'How to put on a convincing Irish accent.' <https://learn-english.wonderhowto.com/how-to/put-convincing-irish-accent-326679/>.
5. BBC, Irish Passport Applications Skyrocket. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46030552>.

6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/17/brexit-deal-gives-more-rights-to-irish-passport-holders-experts-say>. Accessed 19 December 2018.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/irish-passport-england-uk-andrew-bridgen-tory-mp-brexit-border-eu-a8587286.html>. Accessed 19 December 2018.
8. This provision can be found in Article 342 of the TFEU, which states: the rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Union shall, without prejudice to the provisions contained in the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union, be determined by the Council, acting unanimously by means of regulations.
9. Central Statistics Office (2016) Irish language profile. <https://cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil>. Accessed 19 December 2018.
10. I mean common sense in the manner in which Geertz (1975) writes about it, as a cultural system.

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CHAPTER 1

The Irish Community at Home and Abroad

Robin Boylorn and Mark Orbe (2014) contend that auto-ethnography, writing about one's own experiences as an explanation that motivates specific research interests, can be used to convey information derived from sense experience; Peter Collins and Anselma Gallinat (2010) also claim that the self is the primary conveyance of formative pre-theoretical notions and that recounting these events serves to heighten the experience of ethnographic engagement. Despite the potential shortcomings of auto-ethnography, there is a vignette from my own childhood which I believe can concisely impart formative experiences that took place in the company of my Irish-American cousins. The necessity of this vignette's inclusion stems from the overwhelming number of cross-cutting issues it entails: belonging, diaspora membership, the necessity to perform one's identity and of Irishness more generally.

In March of 1993, my Irish-American mother drove two of my Irish-American cousins and myself down to a remote castle in County Cork, in the province of Munster in Ireland. At the very top of Blarney Castle, which is surrounded by lush groves of beautifully arranged thickets and meadows, is a kind of enclosure surrounded by fortress walls, but which is also exposed to the elements. The main attraction lies off to one side of, and atop, a small pile of scaffolding. The reason for our journey was to visit 'The Blarney Stone' which, when kissed, is thought to imbue those undergoing the ritual with the gift of 'eloquence'. First, it might be important to stress that while the gift that is 'acquired' through this odd ritual is not exactly eloquence as such but is, in actuality, commonly

referred to as the 'gift of the gab', a symbolic construction that binds those who have undergone the ritual and those living in Ireland. It is, without reading between the lines, thought to involve the initiand's induction into receiving a claim of belonging and the gift of being seamlessly akin to the Irish in manners of speech, even after (or especially after perhaps) they have departed from Ireland. Put otherwise, the gap between diaspora belonging and Irishness can be closed through this one act, so its importance is difficult to overstate.

Obtaining this highly prized ethnic marker was why we had arrived and my cousins ran quickly past our tour guide in order to ensure that they had a good place in line. I was more fearful and hesitant. What was required, as can be seen partially in Fig. 1.1, is that the neophytes lie on their back, grab a hold of two iron bars, necessary for securing oneself, and to kiss a part of the rock that is smoother than elsewhere on the castle's inner wall. An attendant assists in this, laying his/her hands on the torso of anyone supplicating themselves to the rite.



Fig. 1.1 Kiss the Blarney Stone

What cannot be observed in Fig. 1.1, though, is that there is a sheer drop, protected only by a fine grill, over which the head of the prospective initiand is placed. My fear of heights got the better of me and I stood ramrod still as my cousins beckoned me to join them in the queue. I saw participant after participant undergo the procedure; I remember the majority of them as being (Irish-)Americans who had Irish roots, but no matter how expertly it was conducted, time after time, I could not be convinced to partake.

I remember feeling quite embarrassed at this. My cousins returned and were now affecting Irish accents. My mother spoke to me shortly thereafter, upon seeing my dejection. ‘You know that you don’t have to kiss the Blarney Stone though, right?’ I was intrigued. ‘Why not?’ ‘Well, you were born here, your father is Irish and you speak Irish. There’s no need for you to do this like there is for them. You already are Irish’. I remember feeling incredibly relieved. What had not occurred to me at that time, but which would become a huge theoretical concern during my academic career, was what had constituted Irishness in this instance; why was it that I did not have to perform in the way that they had? What exactly made me more Irish than them and why was I thought to be exempt from having to display it? What makes anyone Irish at all?

What is at stake in this vignette is still as relevant to my research today as it was when it occurred over two decades ago. In unpacking what had happened, or at least how I remember what had happened, what had taken place was the concretising of a claim to belonging by way of something irreducibly associated with one’s identity; my cousins had travelled from overseas and in so doing had been given the opportunity to (re)connect with their roots. To me, it was a matter of driving for about three hours to a new locale. What was more was that I did not have to get in touch with a connection that was imaginary in nature or that had to be retrieved; my connection seems to have been secured by a kind of factual bind and just by dint of what might be viewed as contingent things, I was thought to be exempt from having to commemorate my identity.

The questions take on a different dimension when measured against the concerns of mobility, imaginary connections over time, how we perceive of difference (and how we differentiate) and particularly when placed against the backdrop of massive webs of significance, which is not secure. This work is dedicated to the task of directly engaging with these issues. Returning to the vignette outlined previously, we might begin to place

the transformation of the subject, their 'becoming' something else, front and centre by asking: how do the Irish community abroad reorient themselves to new surroundings? Do they maintain a connection to their home (and if so what constitutes this connection)? Do they become something else, and in so doing lose something of their original identity? What role does the Irish language play in how their views of themselves change? Does this depend on who is speaking (or not speaking) the language? What messages about Irishness are being transmitted more generally throughout the media and what are these messages symbolically communicating? These questions are engaged in the chapters that follow; first, perhaps, we might need to get a better overview of the area in which this study takes place.

The distance between Belgium and Ireland is a little over 500 miles. How 'close' Ireland and Belgium are, though, is not something that can be measured in miles. For instance, in terms of the European Union's development in the post-war era, the fact that Ireland was at a remove from the continent proper by way of a sea involved a certain sense of disconnectedness, a certain lack of sameness (particularly when Ireland acceded to the European community). Previously in history, the exiles who made Leuven, Belgium, their home tried to maintain a connection with Ireland by studying a Scottish philosopher, Duns Scotus, and would have made no distinction between the Irish and Scottish people in their studies in the seventeenth century. What I mean to communicate is that how difference is constituted changes over time. Belgium and Ireland's nearness is, and always has been, a matter of some debate and touches on a wide range of issues of belonging, wealth, sameness and difference over time.

Belgium is an excellent, unique field site and vantage point from which to examine the Irish community. As alluded to briefly in the previous paragraph, the connections between the two countries run deep, but two overarching themes of this work are Ireland's accession to the European Union (and how Brussels is invariably referred to as 'the heart of Europe') as well as the long-standing historical connection, from the time of the Wild Geese's departure (examined in Chapter 4) to the Irish college which still stands in Leuven today. Belgium is also an excellent country from which to launch an examination into the complex topics of identity formation, one's preferred language and the role played by 'Europe' in reorienting our senses of belonging. Moreover,

as Blainey (2016) laments in an excellent work entitled: *Groundwork for the Anthropology of Belgium: An Overlooked Microcosm of Europe*, Belgium remains a largely overlooked microcosm of anthropological examination, its huge international population and historical interconnectedness (to both Europe and its former colonies, the proper memorialisation of which is still the source of some discord) notwithstanding.

These concerns give rise to questions that are relevant for any anthropological examination of any community, the Irish community in this instance, and include: How has anthropological scholarship on Irish communities been received since its inception? Who is entitled to write about Ireland and why? What is the difference between a diaspora and a community abroad? What binds members of a community together and what sustains them? This chapter is dedicated to answering these questions.

The central theme of the present work is to address the question of how, and exact manner in which, the Irish community in Belgium might be examined anthropologically. Moreover, I attempt to tease out particular difficulties in how the concept of community has been deployed, how it presupposes something that cannot be demonstrated, that is imaginary and personal. Examining the Irish communities who live in Belgium, their claims about belonging and how they imagine their lives also touches on aspects that are deeply personal and strike at the very heart of how we are connected to our place of birth, even though we reside overseas. It is a task for which anthropology is excellently placed, given its emphasis on the personal, shared, and lived character of a particular people group. This introductory chapter aims to establish a general repertoire for what exactly an Irish community is, and how it has been studied anthropologically, so that we can come to better understand how we might investigate an Irish community overseas (and whether that community comprises a diaspora or not).

THE IRISH COMMUNITY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

To introduce the Irish community in Belgium, it is first necessary to cursorily explore the manner in which the Irish community has been studied historically. This section aims to understand the anthropological accounts that have examined the Irish community in its various forms

over time, a necessity to extract what we can understand about a community so that we might examine one in an area *other* than Ireland. This is achieved by honing in on the ways in which it has been possible to understand a group of individuals who were encapsulated by the term community. We begin by tracing the study of community back to the 1930s and by continuing to examinations, undertaken later on that same century, that problematise and trouble the application of the term community to discrete groups of individuals with vastly differing interests. What we see is the development of more sets of tools with which to test the notion of community, as well as the emergence of the subjective dimension that goes hand in hand with questions of belonging. We see the island of Ireland go from being an insufficiently industrialised curiosity that is examined by American and English anthropologists, to a hotly contested region in which the community begins to 'write back' by re-inserting elements from their tradition that are commonly overlooked or misunderstood. Put otherwise, the following sections attempt to understand Irishness as it relates to community belonging and then as it unmoors itself from place and how the idea of an Irish community abroad becomes thinkable, rather than existing as an oxymoron.

The 'Yankee City' project was a community studies project undertaken by William Lloyd Warner in the 1920s in Newburyport, Massachusetts, USA. It set the template for works concerning investigations of modern communities as we think of them today. Warner's students in Harvard, most notably Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, were to be the first exponents, in the twentieth century at least, of both this brand of investigative community analysis and of structural-functional thought more generally. The works they produced that are thought to be most notable include the authoritatively titled: *The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study* (1959 [1939]), authored by Arensberg alone, and *Family and community in Ireland* (1940) co-written with Kimball.

The works attempted to act as a blueprint for future efforts in similar domains and often alternated between descriptions of the community itself and how anthropology is and ought to be practised. In so doing, these authors established a foothold for future structural-functionalist ethnographic examinations; these works placed a premium on analysing aspects of consonant peasant relations and showed the manner in which complex tensions and disjunctures can be resolved at

the community level, lead to harmonious and agreeable social relations (not the other way around). In its most pronounced form, the structural-functionalist account given by Arensberg is thought to capture, within itself, the composition and vicissitudes of all of social life:

Balance, pattern, system, structure, may perhaps seem formidable terms. They may seem too heavy and too prosaic to do justice to the countryman's way of life. Or again, they may strike you as too formal; for what I name with them is compounded of a thousand personal intimacies. Yet no other terms represent so well the fluid realities of social life. (Arensberg 1959 [1939]: 71)

Directly engaging participants in questions of their everyday habits, discussing their viewpoints and how they imagine their community to function seems less important than divining a structure that underpins their lives. This obviously overlooks the personal stake that community members have in the ongoing life of the community. Here, the minutiae of daily life in peasant communities are thought to be reducible to the necessity of accounting for the genesis point of systemic equilibrium; put otherwise, harmony and continuity are assured by structure. Outsiders arrive to a fully functioning and static representation of continuity—a living version of the Blarney Stone in a sense that secures an identity in place. Arensberg's account of community life was released and gave pride of place to balance and structure. At around the same time, though, we can already view something of a schism occurring within the anthropological structural-functional paradigm in Malinowski's work *The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis* (1939) in which the *individual* starts to feature more prominently. Malinowski's aim here is to recapitulate the manner in which practices unfold and are enacted over time and become embodied by institutions, rather than by communities (here he means a community's view on economics, education, social control and political formations). This work begins to at least touch on the notion that individuals are necessary to the perseverance of communities, which at least hints at the possibility that individuals make and remake a community, and that it might be slightly less dependent on structural ties than previously thought. However, there is still often a great deal of hand-wringing and other overwrought expressions of concern over the death of communities in anthropological accounts, which is examined in the following section.

Malinowski's analysis involves examining the institutional mediation that is brought into existence to meet a variety of individually derived needs (basic, instrumental, and symbolic and integrative needs):

[I]n these analyses the twofold approach through the study of the individual with his innate tendencies and their cultural transformation, and the study of the group as the relationship and co-ordination of individuals, with reference to space, environment and material equipment is necessary. (Malinowski 1939: 954)

The fusing together of the individual and the space in which those individuals' needs are met can be closely aligned with the dual notions of the interrelation of the individual and the community.¹ A community must be interested and informed by a group of individuals of which it comprises; a dynamic interaction must take place.

In sum, we have seen two opposing views on the structural aspects of community, as that which binds and as it developed into the domain of community as a mediated, personal and interpersonal domain. We begin to see greater engagement with community members from the late 1960s on, as well as a parenthetical move away from the felt necessity of positing a structure or system that accounts for community life; instead, we turn to accounts of community that are more peopled or inhabited than they had been previously.

A COMMUNITY OF INDIVIDUALS

The shift in focus to the individuals as a complementary part of a community can also be viewed in the anthropology of Ireland. Accounts written with a structural-functional² bent in mind began to undergo a change in terms of the roles played by chronological processes, such as decline, change and flux; in other words, writing on the topic of Ireland became something different as time passed, starting roughly from the late 1960s. The individual actors began to emerge from behind their structural-functional scaffolding and less emphasis was placed on the necessity for community to imbue identities to those who subscribe to it and it became less place-centric. Identity, ethnicity and expressions of selfhood take centre stage and these considerations remain as personal to people as community life, but do not depend on them for meaning. In a manner of speaking, here we can also see a clear

distinction between the disciplines of sociology and cultural anthropology, given the former discipline's emphasis on the underpinning of individual behaviours and the latter discipline's interests in the individual's behaviour from a cultural view. Cultural views are not immutable things though and are always involved in the processes of change over time as interests and institutions shift. The notion of change is an integral one to understanding Irish community life and the lives of those living within.

In the decades following the pioneering publications of Kimball and Arensberg, we find publications that embrace and emphasise change, such as in Hugh Brody's *Inishkillane: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland* (1973) and in Nancy Scheper-Hughes' work *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland* (1979). Both works are set in the fictive communities of Inishkillane (located in County Clare, Ireland) and Ballyblan (in the Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry, Ireland) and are typified by themes of social disintegration, rather than by the self-regulating, unchanging communities which had been espoused in their generational forebears. Moreover, though, they retain the notion of a bounded community as the central point of reference from which broader themes of individual experiences of isolation, mental illness, and emigration can be contextualised and examined ethnographically. It is only in the aftermath of these works' publication that something of a sea-change happened in the perception of community, continuity and the very position from which authorship about Ireland could take place. This turn towards interpersonal engagement is certainly an interesting one for anthropology, and separating personal and interpersonal examinations of shared issues (such as continuity, isolation, and emigration) is fascinating grist for the mill of any anthropological engagement. With this expanding of the horizons of anthropology, though, came a certain critical engagement with Irish commentators who rejected the impressions that anthropologists were broadcasting on their behalves.

For instance, in a scathing review of *Inishkillane*, Gibbon (1973) claims that both Brody's work (1973) and Arensberg and Kimball's work (1959 [1939]) fail to document the exact manner in which change over time is actually thought to occur and that they both fall prey to romantically inclined examinations:

The fact is, therefore, that none of the 'changes' in Irish rural society which Brody identifies is (sic) novel at all. All that they are novel in relation to is rural Irish society as it was romantically depicted by Arensberg

and Kimball. Arensberg and Kimball's functionalist theoretical position produced an account of the Luogh which had more in common with the vision of obscurantist nativists and revivalists than with concrete reality. On every score -the family, the 'mutual aid' system, the economic and cultural stability of the system and its politics- their account ranges from the inaccurate to the fictive. (Gibbon 1973: 491)

Here, we can see the opposition of precision with the difficulty of accounting for a community. Orienting anthropological accounts towards a single community, thought to be representable in monographic terms, comes at the expense of examining external factors (change, emigration and what communities become over time particularly). Accounts that were of an overly static sort,³ and which examined change and decline as foregone conclusions, ignored the manner in which new sorts of communities were also emerging in the wake of Ireland's history of emigration. Falling prey to the romanticism latent in accounts of communities in decline seems to lend itself, rather invariably, to exactly this sort of romantically inclined dejection; nowhere is this more visible than in a work entitled: *Gola: The Life and Last Days of an Island Community* (1969), written by F. H. A. Aalen and Hugh Brody:

[The people of Gola] are no longer willing to live in isolation, separated from the opportunities and excitements they have come to associate with urban centres. They expect more than their small community can provide. And as they leave, so such communities do become able to provide less and less... Yet it is but one of many remote communities that share a paramountly unifying feature: like so many other isolated centres of rural life, it does seem to be coming to an end. (Aalen and Brody 1969: 126)

It is on this ominous note that the work concludes. In reading this account, I have always been struck with why it was that the author must consider the community to be coming to an end, rather than the members of that community becoming something different elsewhere through mobility. This romanticism, apocalyptic resignation and hand-wringing about the fate of particular place-bound communities become things of the past as scholarship on Irish communities moved into the twenty-first century and as discussions on the possibility of overseas communities of Irish people slowly emerges. There is still a significant gap in scholarship on the topic of the Irish community in Europe, given the fact that the topic of the diaspora in anglophone countries

seems to take greater precedence in this domain. However, with the departure from the conventional concerns of backwardness and development came new expressions of a lost authenticity and a jeopardised Irishness. This topic is examined in the following section.

‘NATIVE’ TAKES ON IRISH LIFE: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF IRELAND

The history of the anthropology of Ireland is one which is replete with references both to an underdeveloped country, but also to an idyllic and bucolic domain. The concern over the erasure of Irish communities is another symptom of the preferential place that is given to the community; why would it not be equally valid to turn one's interest to the people that departed and to the communities that were established in the aftermath of emigration? Systems of cultural stability that focus on the composition and function of the family fail to capture the dynamism of a mobility that has always been deeply rooted in Irish life.⁴ Brody's aforementioned work falls prey to a kind of fatalism that ties the inhabitants of an 'Island community' to that very island. Leaving Ireland does not mean that you sever the connection with it totally, nor is it the same as being erased from a continuity and authenticity that is often prescribed to communities by the authors who document them. The difficulty that anthropologists were faced with as the end of the twentieth century drew near, and in the early years of the twenty-first century, was whether or not this view of a rooted and static area necessarily incurred, or actually gave rise to, the problems in the scholarship on Ireland that had occurred previously.

By the 1970s, it certainly appeared that the purchase that the term 'community' had once possessed was beginning to slacken significantly for this very reason. Wilson and Donnan remark:

The concept of 'community' seemed to have diminished explanatory power, and the changing nature of Irish life, due to the related forces of modernization, economic development, secularism and integration with a wider Europe of the nine member states of the European Common Market (Ireland and the United Kingdom became members in 1973) made people both more mobile and more involved in new relations of class, status and culture. (Wilson and Donnan 2006: 24)

Interesting here is that the concepts employed to represent community life had themselves changed and were no longer appropriate to the task they sought to legitimate, i.e. understanding the community and, through it, the people who reside there. My examination takes a different departure point by suspending the concern with whether or not the Irish in Belgium comprises a community by focussing on their concern with belonging. This is a task that is easier said than done and involved the disembedding both of the necessity of the term community and also the necessity to have authors from overseas write on behalf of Irish people, rather than including a 'native' view of the phenomenon.

Wilson and Donnan provide a summary overview of the conceptual cachet that Kimball and Arensberg's work had over the ethnographic writing of small, Irish communities that were often construed as being subject to the dual yokes of the declining stature of the peasantry, on the one hand, and the omnipresence of alienation and emigration on the other. What occurred in the era following this rejection of writing carried out on discrete areas of Ireland by outsiders, in certain areas of the academic community, was a recapturing from within of folk-histories and the undertaking of smaller ethnographic ventures conducted by 'natives'. The account included works such as Ó' Hógáin's examination of popular attitudes to Irish poetry (1979), Bourke's writing on Irish women and lamentation poetry, 'cultural loss' and the virtuality of Irish lore (1993, 1998, 1999, respectively), Uí Ógáin's work on Irish fairy music (2012), Breathnach's work on Irish pipers in Co. Kerry (1985) and Ó' Crualaoich's examination of Irish funerary traditions (1993). These works illustrate a spike in interest in the examination of tradition and custom as it was practised in Ireland. What occurs in the period following the decline of the persuasiveness of structural-functional accounts is a resurgence and interest in examining an individuated Irishness in a manner unbound from community, an Irishness which is negotiated, deployed, contested and resisted in different ways in diffuse areas of the country.

What has been teased out here is the abiding nature of the term Irish community, as a legacy from structural-functional examinations of various kinds, and the parenthetical shift towards an examination of 'Irish' individuals, and an examination of the Irish individuals by Irish individuals, in terms of the representational expressions that are thought to be idiosyncratically or irreducibly Irish in nature. The difficulty of course here is that what Irishness is, as expressed in the vignette provided in the beginning of this chapter, is something that is oddly innate,

there unknowingly, and in a manner that does not need to be commemorated or displayed. Prior to my relocating to Belgium, this is certainly how I would have viewed questions of identity and belonging, but this is no longer true.

While I have provided details of works conducted by Irish thinkers and folklorists seeking to reclaim an ethnological foothold, one recent and excellent example of the difficulty in writing about an unexamined Irishness can be observed in Olaf Zenker's *Irish/ness Is All Around Us: Language Revivalism and the Culture of Ethnic Identity in Northern Ireland* (2013). In it, Zenker observes the manner in which Irishness is treated as a social construct, which is unbound from place, and the mode in which it is related to the Irish language. It also details the troubling 'obviousness' of one's own identity. The early sections of the work relay this difficulty in the following manner:

My open questions such as 'What ethnic or national identity do you have?' at times even irritated my interlocutors, not so much, as I figured out, because they felt like I was contesting their sense of identity but, to the contrary, because the answer 'Irish' seemed so obvious. 'What else could I be?' was a rhetorical question I often encountered in such conversations, indicating to me that, for many, Irish identity went without saying. If this was the case, then what did being Irish mean to these people? [...] [I]f senses of Irishness were possibly but not exclusively found in representations and practices of the Irish language, where else could they be found? (Zenker 2013: 3–4)

Zenker's formulation is interesting because it stems from an inductive frustration that arrives out of the encounter with a tacit understanding of one's identity. This is a phenomenon that is difficult to scrutinise and which must be countered with rhetoric. If individuals do not need to determine their meaning from a community necessarily, they become freer to choose (or not to choose) how they deploy their ethnic or national identity. This also necessitates the conducting of actual interviews with individuals and living among a people group and participating in their daily activities.

I experienced the exact same difficulty as Zenker when carrying out my work. When asking a question, such as: 'How are the Irish European?', it often took some cajoling to move away from stock-responses that were usually of two sorts: either the Irish are European

economically and because of their involvement with the European Union (we became Irish on the very day that we acceded to the European common market in 1973) or we are European by dint of a more long-standing historical tradition (in this instance they might cite the existence of the Irish college and the involvement of the Irish in warfare on the continent as evidence of this connection). Both views are complicated for a wide variety of reasons. The first argument, that the Irish in Belgium are European because of their involvement in the European community over time, pays insufficient regard to the change in perception that took place with respect to the Irish community. What might we make of the perception, prominent in 1973, that Ireland was an underdeveloped 'emigrant nursery' and how this changed in a little over four decades from backward, to equals to a somewhat softly Eurosceptical entity and on and on. The Irish community's belonging in Belgium, and how it is informed by European membership, is the topic of Chapter 3.

The second view, mentioned above, that the Irish community in Belgium 'belong' because of the presence of a long-standing tradition of the Irish college, also overlooks a great deal of discontinuity. Founded in 1607, St. Anthony's College (colloquially referred to as the Irish college in Leuven, alternatively written in French as Louvain), is not immune to shifts in its meaning over time. For instance, if we sought continuity out as our mooring point for a kind of Irishness, we would be confronted with further issues: while the site was the first site to publish an Irish-English dictionary, it has no tradition of Irish language scholarship at present. The Irish college originally doubled as a church, but it was deconsecrated in 1983; the most prominent figure who lived there and documented one of the earliest annals of Irish history, Florence Conry, is said to be buried there, but there are many dissenting accounts of whether or not this is true. To that end, how Irishness can (and cannot) be grounded historically is the topic to which Chapter 2 is oriented (Fig. 1.2).

A great deal of theoretical attention has been paid to the notion of an Irish community and the abiding feature of an Irish community is that it problematises definitions and exceeds representations about it. The individuals who imagine themselves to belong to a community must therefore be engaged. In order to lay the groundworks for the examinations of Irishness found in Chapters 3 and 4, we must first return to the notion of community and specifically to the imagined component thereof; however, this time I separate Irishness from Irish identity in

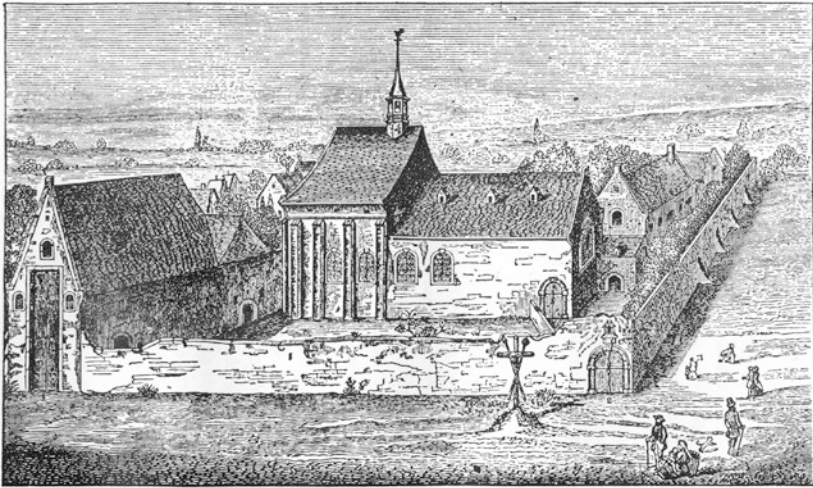


Fig. 1.2 St. Anthony's College, Louvain (as it was in the eighteenth century, drawn by William Oldham)

order to carry forward the notion of an expression of what 'being Irish' means without having to tie it either to a geographical locale or to the ethnic marker of Irish language competence, for instance. Senses of Irishness, representations and speech acts in Irish became unbound and become practically explorable anywhere. But, would such a thing as an Irish community abroad be possible? In order to address the possibility of an Irish community abroad, it is first necessary to examine more contemporary critiques of the term community and its applicability.

IMAGINING IRISH COMMUNITY AT HOME AND ABROAD

The notion of community generally appears, in the beginning of the twentieth century, to be part of a dualistic whole which exists to forward the interests of the inner workings of structural functionalism, the individual and community (or to the more utilitarian construct of group), as examined previously. Raymond Williams' account is one that attempts to disembody the term community from its utilitarian capacity; instead, Williams displays the warmth with which the concept has been embraced and the homogeneity that the term itself presupposes:

Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term. (Williams 1985: 76)

Community, from among any of the terms used to characterise or map out various models of territorially defined intersubjectivity, describes both a state of existing relationships, but also (according to Williams) points to the emergence of new sets of relationships.

This is a possibility that is overlooked in accounts that frame emigration in terms of the irreversible loss of community as such, as observed previously in Brody's work. What might stand in opposition to community, at the ontological level, may be something akin to the felt belonging that an individual has to a particular community, even if it changes over time. This form of belonging is examined in Bauman (2000) who takes this issue as his point of departure. Williams contends that community's primary feature, apart from its pliability, is its abiding quality, while Bauman views it as a little more unstable than that:

In so far as they [communities, ed.] need to be defended to survive and they need to appeal to their own members to secure that survival by their individual choices and take for that survival individual responsibility - all communities are postulated; projects rather than realities, something that comes after, not before the individual choice. The community 'as seen in communitarian paintings' would be tangible enough to be invisible and to afford silence; but then communitarians won't paint its likenesses, let alone exhibit them. (Bauman 2000: 169)

We can see that because communities cannot be realised in one space and time, that there is a supplementary and ongoing quality to them, an agreement of sorts about their existence. Moreover, communities are postulated, unproven entities whose projects are ongoing and whose priorities change over time. This is a much different tack than the one taken in the accounts examined previously (by Arensberg and Kimball for instance), given that Bauman acknowledges that communities become other entities and change over time. Community is put forward in my work as a tentative entity which has a postulated quality, but is one which is more useful as a collective designation than it is as an

individually felt entity. In the closing remarks of Vered Amit and Nigel Rapport's *The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity* (2002), they contend:

Over the last three decades, cultural analysts have increasingly resorted to this form of proclaimed category (i.e. community, ed.), fictive communality as the theoretical model for all forms of community. But some of the most crucial forms of fellowship, of belonging, are barely marked by explicit symbolic icons... But some of the personal links that arise through these experiences carry on. Most people are able to transform some of these encounters into more dyadic personal relationships that can be exported into different contexts. (Amit and Rapport 2002: 63–64)

By fictive, I take Amit and Rapport to mean that communities are imagined entities, by and large, and their persistence depends upon subjects who can never be present or fully represented to one another (keeping Williams' definition in mind). We must understand that the imagination functions in a manner that can create a 'we-feeling' around remote or proximal fellow-subjects. This is a necessity given that our later concern (in Chapter 6), the topic of the imaginaries, involves delving into an intersubjective imagined domain that comprises a community all of its own from within. Anderson (1983) has pioneered this idea, and writing on the idea of community contends that:

It [community, ed.] is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 1983: 6, emphasis in original)

We can also come to know people, encounter difference and draw linkages with those residing elsewhere through travel; intimacy, proximity, and mobility are all thought to lead to the development of a supranational 'we-feeling' (Deutsch et al. 1957). This is indicative of a successfully imagined community and it is the commonly expected outcome of intra-European mobility (this is examined more fully in Chapter 2).

The seminal role played by imaginaries of belonging can be evidenced by examining how it is that we approximate sameness and difference. While identity is the subject of the following chapter, for now it suffices to mention that the role played by the individual in imagining

a community can be observed in the intentional glossing over of a certain amount of difference between members of a group (but not all differences). This has been noted by Guibernau and Rex (1997):

It is not simply having physical or cultural characteristics that is important but rather the subjective perception of those characteristics, both by those who share them and those who react to them [...] It is political community, however it is organised, which appeals to shared ethnicity and brings it into action. (Guibernau and Rex 1997: 2)

From this we have the notion that communities depend less on cultural similarity than *on the perception or imagination of that similarity*; this informs how a given expression of a particular culture is thought about and it is for this reason that communities should be thought of as imaginary. In response, academic practitioners should attempt to emphasise the importance of imaginaries to how we view ourselves and others; however, we must aver and avoid the reduction of imaginaries to something fictive or unimportant.

One excellent example of a change in the perception of a community, and of its belonging and membership, can be observed in Noel Ignatiev's account of the Irish diaspora in America in *How the Irish Became White* (1995). In it, the author reveals that the work does not concern race at all but, instead, focusses on ethnicity and ethnic transformation. He writes:

In Britain, the Irish constituted a subject race. Because blackness was the badge of the slave in America, people from Ireland who went there entered the free labour system, which made them part of the dominant race. As unskilled workers, they occupied the lowest place within it. Ethnicity marked the spot. (Ignatiev 1995: 186)

Curiously placed in the postscript, this final section reveals how it was possible for the Irish (not members of discrete communities or from particular locales, but to whom the label was thought to indiscriminately apply) came to belong in the United States over time, through changes to the subjective category of their belonging, i.e. their ethnicity. The previous examination of the anthropological/sociological accounts of Irish people in the twentieth century was confined to particular locales, and the manner in which they perceived their daily lives and the mode in which they applied meaning thereto. By the end of

the twentieth century, the Irish subject seems to have become unmoored as a focal point of analysis. Greater emphasis was placed on how the Irish became involved in other claims of belonging and less on how communities sustain themselves. It is exactly this unmooring, the treatment of a subjective phenomenon changes over time, that is the epistemological underpinning of this current project.

Community, as well as other expressions of belonging and sameness, can be thought of in exactly this manner, as merely a reflection of ethnicity which is coupled with a presupposed, imaginatively proscribed quality which unites those it is thought to encapsulate:

[C]ommunal, local, regional, national, and ‘racial’ identities can all be understood as locally and historically specific variants on a general and ancient theme of collective identification: ethnicity. Each of these variants says something about “the social organisation of culture difference”... They are, if you like, culturally imagined and socially consequential. (Jenkins 2002: 125)

How communities are composed of a common perception thereof, and how this determines the way in which we imagine other people’s lives to be, is quite similar to a passage found in William Shakespeare’s *Henry V* (1599). In it, theatregoers are invited to suspend their disbelief at the stage on which the play is happening and are asked instead to replace it, in their mind’s eye, with the fields of Agincourt:

.....But
 pardon, Gentles all: The
 flat unraised spirits, that
 hath dar’d On this
 unworthy Scaffold, to bring
 forth
 So great an Object. Can this Cock-Pit hold
 The Vastie fields of France? Or
 can we cram Within this
 Wooden O, the very Caskes
 That did affright the Ayre of Agincourt? (*Henry V*, Lines 8–14)

In sum, this chapter has attempted to set the stage for how we might imagine, and reimagine, the Irish community in order to understand how it would function abroad. I have reviewed a plethora of concepts

that lay the groundwork in terms of introducing and operationalising a variety of terms, as well as complicated and problematised their all-too-easy application. The chapter that follows takes this template, but approaches how we might think of the Irish in Europe from another angle, namely that of identity.

NOTES

1. Malinowski writes that his brand of functionalism differs from that of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown which he claims rejects the role played by the individual, and their biology, and aligns his efforts more with that of Robert Lowie's ethnological enquiry (1939: 939, Fn. 1).
2. Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sivert Nielsen's *A History of Anthropology* (2001) devotes only a short section to the shift in academic fervour for Malinowski's functionalism and Radcliffe-Brown's Structural functionalism in which they write: 'By 1950, Radcliffe-Brownians had secured jobs at Cambridge, Manchester and University College London, and the Malinowskians seem to have lost the competition for academic control... Functionalism explanations should always be examined closely, to see whether they in fact specify all the links by which the "purposes" and "needs" of the whole are communicated to the individual actor. This will lead us to focus on process and communication rather than function and structure'. (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 72–75). The section, entitled *Functionalism's last stand*, concerns the entry onto the scene of the sophisticated analyses of Gregory Bateson, the ushering in of whose work is thought to have brought an end to studies which touted the centrality of function and structure over intersubjective examinations of process and time.
3. The trope of 'vanishing Ireland' is examined again in Chapter 6.
4. This is examined in Chapter 4 on the topic of the Irish college in Leuven.

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Identity Politics, Belonging and Europe

The earliest phases of the fieldwork on which this book has been based were marred with many conceptual difficulties; one such example, the particular difficulty of what exactly an Irish community abroad means, has been the overriding concern of the previous chapter. Questions that were posited about how the Irish community relate to their fellow Europeans in Belgium often resulted in hesitation or incredulity. Informants would often take issue with different components of the formulation mentioned previously. Some responded that Irish people are *also* European, and there is no *one* Irish community abroad, but many, or that those residing in Belgium were Belgian, not European.¹ Additional questions about identity, mobility and what exactly being European involves (and if it is a thing at all) compounded these problems significantly. One common refrain was that Brussels is ‘Europe’,² a conflation that can be observed in Fig. 2.1, while others maintained that Brussels, and Belgium more generally, maintained a discrete identity of its own. Similarly, the Irish community’s belonging in Belgium was also scrutinised as being either impossible or a foregone conclusion; on the grounds of a shared European viewpoint, the Irish were already aligned with their European counterparts, while other informants maintained that the Irish community in Brussels was a thing in itself, something quite apart and unique. Concerns were also expressed to me that my work sought to draw lines in the sand so that clear-cut categories would emerge; I expressed my disinterest in such cut-and-dry categories on every occasion on which this concern was shared.³



Fig. 2.1 Souvenir store on Rue La Montagne (Author's own)

This chapter examines the interplay between different concept-metaphors or how we imagine things much larger than ourselves to be. Concept-metaphors can reduce complex phenomenon to intelligible wholes (such as the Irish, 'Europe' and others), and through them, we can attempt to lay bare the architectural underpinnings of Irish involvement, different takes on European identity and the process of Europeanisation. The purpose of this chapter is to examine, with respect to the incredible swathe of literature on 'European' belonging, whether the Irish who establish a 'community' therein are thought to incur the loss of their national belonging or identity in order to become European. The focus of this chapter concerns the way in which the European citizen has been theorised, the meaning of Europeanisation to those involved in the project of European integration and the role mobility plays in anthropological representations of belonging.

There are many different kinds of conceptual understandings of the entity that 'Europe' is, such as when it is broadly framed in terms of it as a fortress (Mandel 1994) as a borderland (Balibar 2003; Shore and Black 1994; Anderson et al. 2003; Wilson and Donnan 2006) or as being

constituted by ‘borderlands’ (Asher 2005), as being occupied by ‘liminal Europeans’ (Nic Craith 2009), as ‘a committee of regions’ (De Jager 2009) or, more recently, as a ‘gated community’ (van Houtum and Pijpers 2007). This work attempts to offer insights from an intra-European perspective by analysing ethnographic vignettes and details experiences narrated by one minority stakeholder in the postulation of a European identity, the Irish community in continental Europe.

EUROPEAN IDENTITY

This section examines the relationship between nationality, citizenship and belonging. Gellner (1983) has convincingly posited that the desire for nationality, and of national belonging, emerges from the wish to ensure the commensurability of the political will of the people and the populous that it represents. The stakes are perhaps even grander in the example of the European Union, due to its often-critiqued ‘democratic deficit’ (Campbell 2011; Debomy 2011). Shore contends, in his now landmark *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (2001a), that the European Union seems to agree: ‘[T]he lack of Demos is the main reason for the lack of democracy and the democratic system without “demos” is just “cratos”, power’ (Shore 2001b: 30) and has begun to represent this ‘demos’ in terms of its broader commonality; closing this gap was effectively managed through the postulation of a European Identity.⁴ Put otherwise, European belonging can be seen as a conduit for the legitimacy of the European Union and serves a conveyance through which to address its democratic deficit. The thinking seems to be that if there is such a thing as a European identity, then there can be no democratic deficit. Macdonald (1993) contends, however, that a more systematic revision of the subject positions, adopted by those residing in Europe, is required prior to the development of something resembling a European public sphere. The development of a European public sphere that is inhabited could only be the by-product of a dialogue that takes place among Europeans:

Europe was gradually invented as a knowable, countable, representable space (with the Eurostat branch of the commission, and the positivistic *Eurobarometer* created to effect this governable Europe) and one increasingly rationalised in time and space [...] With constant encouragement from the parliament, the notion of a people’s Europe was born

in the mid-1980's in which 'symbols' and 'culture' became increasingly important in explicit exercises of 'consciousness-raising.' (MacDonald 1993: 54)

This effort of consciousness-raising is generally referred to as Europeanisation and entails, according to Borneman and Fowler (1997), the transgression of nationally imposed limits to the threshold of supranational ones. These supranational ones involve engaging in mobility through which Europe comes to meaningfully occupy a role in one's construction of identity and in one's belonging.

The postulation of a total European identity (one that is tied to one nation or language) has been subject to the changing economic character of its organisation over time, has become less monopolistic in view and has become more focussed on the citizenry, upon solidarity and has almost completely faded from view. This notion has remained in terms of the working definition of 'Europeanisation' however. The first thing we should note about European belonging is that it is simply another layer to our identity and it is actually thought to be more complementary than radically life-altering. We can observe why this might be by turning to the work of Abeles (2004):

Deterritorialized, virtual Europe, does not change people's identity but brings them to a completely new perspective on their own traditions. Even if there is no word in the political vocabulary to qualify Europe (is it post-national, supranational, poststate, multigovernmental?) it appears that Europe as an emerging form will significantly change Europeans' conceptions of politics and identity. (Abeles 2004: 25)

This lack of change in people's identity is mentioned as a cornerstone to being part of a 'People's Europe' (Addonino 1985) and in the 'Charta for European Identity' (Havel 2004); in both works though, certain traits are valorised such as mobility and multilingualism. The common association of Europeanness and the ability to speak more than one language (or the absence of that ability) are a recurring motif in the lives of the Irish community in Belgium.

Shore speaks to this point by reminding us that: '[C]onstructing Europe requires the creation of Europeans not simply as an objectified category of EU passport holders and "citizens" but more fundamentally as a category of subjectivity' (Shore 2001a: 30). However, what Shore may be understating here is that Europeanisation may well occur with

only a provisional change in perspective and that there may be different manners, rather than measurable degrees, in which people become Europeanised. It is often difficult to discern the degree to which the construction of supranationality presupposes the abandonment of individual nationalities and the distinction regarding the manner in which belonging changes over time remains unclear. Others maintain that there is an oil-and-water level of irreconcilability between the two different strands of hierarchy, i.e. one's national and postnational identities (Taras 2009). I do not share this view and believe that undertaking intra-European migration journeys allows us to re-examine our identities and to acquire some distance from overbearing narratives of nationhood. Moreover, it draws our attention back to the fact of identity's fungibility that it is made and remade and is supplementary, rather than fixed. Community and identity, as imagined and supplementary phenomenon, are two of the conceptual pillars on which this work has been based, but the idea of a supplementary form of belonging was identified long ago by a prominent member of the Irish community abroad, namely James Joyce.

One example of this supplementariness can be found in *Portrait of the Artist as a young man* (1916) in which James Joyce provides an interesting telescopic lens through which to explore this notion, wherein the lead character (Joyce's own, thinly-veiled, literary alter ego) Stephen Dedalus attempts to write his home address in full. He writes:

Stephen Dedalus
 Class of elements
 Clongowes Wood College
 Sallins, County Kildare
 Ireland
 Europe
 The Universe. (Joyce 1964 [1916]: 10)

Here, Joyce illuminates the degree to which Europe as a continent can be imagined in place of another exterior landmass (the curiously absent reference to the British Isles, of which Ireland is a part)⁵ as a possible locus of identity, as one which requires expatriation in order to be encountered; this is also what Joyce affected when he placed himself in self-imposed exile in 1904 in France.⁶ What is also interesting is the kind of stepwise movement of identifiability; what I mean is that if someone were unfamiliar with County Kildare specifically, for instance, it would be possible to

move to the next sentence down for more clarity, to Ireland. Once again, if the person with whom we are speaking is unfamiliar with Ireland, the next option would be to remark is that it is in Europe. The scale here also moves from the personal to the remote, from the local to the regional and on to the national, supranational and planetary, from the cultured to the cultureless, where exactly Europe finds itself on the continuum of culture or culturelessness is examined in the following paragraph.

I must begin by contending that Europe does not have its own 'culture' as such, according to Llobera (2003), due to the necessity of having to exceed the dimensions of one's own nation in order to encounter a possible Europeanness:

The strength of nationalism is far from being undermined by the existence of a transnational elite parading its cosmopolitanism in selected circles of academics, business people and others. As to European identity, in no way can we say that, at the cultural level, there is at present an entity that we can call 'Europe'. The fact of the matter is that the everyday horizon of most Europeans is still nation and state-based, if not regionally coloured. (Llobera 2003: 172)

Instead, Llobera contends, we might think of 'Europe' as being an *idée-force* that has its own volitional momentum and does not require pioneering Eurocrats to extol its virtues. While not intent on uprooting or disembedding one's subjective identification, and following Gellner (1983), their political identification with 'Europe' is an attempt to be one which sits alongside or adjacent to one's national identity.

'Europe', given that it does not have a distinct culture of its own, is often thought to be in competition with nations for the seemingly limited resources of identification and solidarity, rather than as something which is complementary thereto. Duchesne (2008) writes:

As a would-be political community and sovereign entity, Europe is in competition with its own nations for the identification of its citizens. If we believe Anderson to be correct about the way people imagine themselves in their nation, and considering the way the European Union is expanding (by taking precedence over national governments in an increasing range of activities and giving direct rights to people to select governing elites) we should expect European feelings of belonging to develop in direct competition with former national attachments. (Duchesne 2008: 405)

‘Europe’ as an emergent, not-yet, ever-closer Union of Member States is viewed as being postnational to the core and, therefore, at odds with pre-existing nation states whose validity is ascribed from their time-tested mythos; to that end, relying on classical models of identification (the necessity to share a culture or language for example) serves as sufficient grounds on which to reject something like a European identity.

It is for this reason that belonging ought to be examined in terms of becoming, instead of as a fully hewn, *pret-a-porter*, identity and subjective orientation that exceeds one’s national one and which is fixed in space. Just as a community is built around the interethnic and intersubjective characterisation of which it is comprised, so too is identity being made and remade, certain aspects of which are emphasised or augmented, while others can be concealed. This kind of interstitial approach, something that takes identity as less of an all-or-nothing phenomenon, is very beneficial to social scientists and allows us to trace the contours of how mobility and exposure to different contexts reshapes and informs one’s worldview. This betweenness can be observed by commentators who acknowledge that things are changing, but are unsure about how to approach and study this slowly emerging phenomenon:

At the same time, the very existence of the EU changes and moulds local cultures and identities, and something new is slowly appearing, some kind of European identity, perhaps, although so far it is difficult to discern with any certainty. (Borgström 2002: 1231)

Anthropology and the method of participant observation are incredibly well suited to an examination of how specific populations describe and characterise how (and if) their view on subjecthood and belonging have changed.

This work attempts to contrast claims of identity and belonging, as being contingent upon fixist notions of belonging, with new understandings of mobile populations. This project, therefore, takes the project of Europeanisation as the broader backdrop against which individual cases of mobility, migration and transnational engagement take place. The opportunity provided in studying the role played by nationality within supranationality emerges from the claim established by Demoissier (2007), with which I am in accord, and which states:

The relationship between culture, identity and politics therefore offers a fruitful way to examine the effects of attempts to create a transnational or multicultural sense of belonging to shared institutions and to foster it at a European level. The formation of a new Europe challenges many of our cultural constructions by raising questions about the nature of our societies and their cultural uniqueness. (Demoissier 2007: 51)

It is at this intersection, of culture, identity and politics that this work situates itself. How it is that people become European, and whether this is even possible, is a subject that is frequently navigated by Irish people who move to Brussels, but the difficulty of pointing to an expression of commonality that speaks to more than 500 million people (roughly the combined population of every Member State) is difficult to overstate. It is to this topic that the following section is dedicated.

Whether there is a tacit underlying identity or relationship between Europe as a geographical entity, a continent, and the political entity of the European Union, or 'Europe', has been hotly contested in anthropological circles and beyond. In order to demonstrate that these two notions are not at odds, I wish to discuss the events of February 15, 2003.

To begin, I wish to restate Anthony Smith's capitulation⁷ of the age-old adage that the easiest way to have people identify with one another, and therefore to conflate political and individual will to create a sense of solidarity, is to give them a common enemy. The example of the events of February 15, 2003 shows, us something altogether different and shows a solidarity based on the detestation of warfare. February 15, 2003, was a worldwide protest of the US military invasion of Iraq and serves as the conceptual underpinning for a kind of European public sphere, as argued by Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida (2005):

A bellicose past once entangled all European nations in bloody conflicts. They drew a conclusion from that military and spiritual mobilization against one another: the imperative of developing new, supranational forms of cooperation after the Second World War. The successful history of the European Union may have confirmed Europeans in their belief that the domestication of state power demands a mutual limitation of sovereignty, on the global as well as the national-state level. (Habermas and Derrida 2005: 296)

These protests point to an actually existing community informed by the European Union's central metanarrative that mutual exchange of the resources required for warfare creates an interdependence, and parenthetical solidarity, among all of its citizenry. Our question becomes, then, how is it that European citizens are formed, if there is no one culture with which a person can ally themselves and if the answer can be found in an examination of the phenomenon of mobility, a topic to which the following section is dedicated.

MOBILITY: MOVING AWAY FROM FIXIST MODELS OF IDENTITY

As mentioned previously, this work aims to scrutinise the connection between identity and fixity. Easthope (2009) claims that rigid and fixist models of identity construction tend to understate the degree to which belonging and identification are processes that occur over time and do not occur alongside shifts in transnational expatriation solely (Bellier 2002; Gatti 2009). This chapter emphasises different forms of becoming and interrogates the desire to move away from a sedentary mode of belonging to an appreciation of multiple modes of belonging that are indeterminate. What is required of anthropologists, then, if the recent 'mobilities turn' (Sheller and Urry 2006) is to be implemented or believed to have occurred at all, is to not only imagine the world as if it were in motion, but rather to acknowledge *that* it is in motion. This turn in the social sciences has guided this project, from its inception stage, and is the counterweight of the anthropological analyses from the twentieth century that indicate that community needs must be studied in place. Mobility, though, is a force that transforms both the individual community member and that community. This being the case we might suggest that people who are mobile still retain aspects of their culture, instead of abandoning it the moment they depart from their region; this abandonment of one's culture is a concern that is completely overlooked in structural-functional accounts of community, for instance. This section examines how this non-static and non-territorially determined anthropological conviction is put into effect, with respect specifically being paid to anthropological examinations of mobility, and which puts the case forward for the movement away from the fixist model of identity which attempts to locate culture in space.

Mobility involves the encountering of difference, can manifest itself as movement, motility (or the potential to move) and can be seen in

everyday examples of global consumerism over time. Mobility, as a field of investigation in its own right, is a notion whose examination seems to have been incited on two fronts, by Malkki (1994) and Clifford (1997). The domain is seminal in cultural anthropology as it gives rise to the question of whether anthropology can be undertaken without having recourse to some strain of mobility or other at all. Salazar (2013) has recently attempted to rewrite Malinowski's excursion between the Trobriand Islands as a kind of prototypical model of anthropological engagements with mobility as a precondition for cultural knowledge. Marcus (1995) in his multi-sited theory has also indicated that 'following' is a legitimate subset of anthropological methodology, popularising a contention previously posited by Appadurai (1996), because it pays a greater amount of attention to movement, as a phenomenological experience, which is conducive to the accrual of various types of capital.

The acknowledgement of the interdependence of movement and stasis is also projected into the past where analyses of movement can further historicise, contextualise and account for current demographic distributions (Sassen 1999; Bakewell and de Hass 2007; and more recently, Johnson et al. 2011). The mobilities paradigm has drawn attention, in so many different manners, to the undergirding notion that mobility has always played a role in the constitution and reconstitution of place.

The mobilities paradigm offers a new mode through which to investigate mobilities, as can be observed in the works of Augé (2002 [1995]), Clifford (1997), Cresswell (1997, 2006), Dalakoglou (2010), Salazar and Glick-Schiller (2014), Salazar (2013), and Urry (2000, 2007). Sheller and Urry (2006) provide a concrete orientation for the paradigm:

The emergent mobilities paradigm problematizes two sets of extant theory. First, it undermines sedentarist theories present in many studies in geography, anthropology and sociology. Sedentarism treats as normal stability, meaning and place, and treats as abnormal distance, change, and placelessness... Second, our critique of 'static' social sciences also departs from those that concentrate on postnational *detritorialisation* processes and the end of states as containers for societies. (Sheller and Urry 2006: 208–210. Emphasis in original)

The sedentarist theories alluded to overlap significantly with the examination of communities witnessed in the previous chapter. The more we interrogate and critique the normalcy with which the ideas of place and

community are co-joined, the closer we get to thinking of a community abroad as a possibility.

This gives rise to the question of whether or not the object proper of mobility (or of the mobilities paradigm more generally) can be known or whether mobilities is simply a conveyance through which to approach a given subject. Frello contends that mobility is also bound to difference, as mobility is the ‘acting out’ of the encounter with difference:

The distinguishing quality of these activities [mobilities, broadly stated, ed.] -what makes them qualify as ‘movement’ activities- is not the overcoming of physical distance, but rather the fact that they involve engaging with some kind of ‘difference’, such as academic disciplines of different (imagined) worlds. (Frello 2008: 29)

Ascribing to mobility the possibility of encountering difference is not the same as maintaining a homeostatic view of the world, if one remains ‘rooted’ to the spot in the community in which they were born. That said, they do share the notion of the individual encountering difference and ‘becoming’ changed by it to varying degrees. This component of becoming and the Irish community in Belgium are the subject of the following section.

BECOMING EUROPEAN

As alluded to in the previous sections, regimes of mobility (Salazar 2013; Salazar and Glick-Schiller 2014) and the moorings (Hannam et al. 2006) upon which they depend do not lose any of their salience and their inclusion is a necessary accompaniment to any examination of mobility; otherwise, analysts run the risk of portraying mobility as a process that is either a one-and-done movement to a new environment to which one must assimilate or they must ascribe an aqueous, random composition to the field. Anthropologists interested in mobility must keep both the destination and the departure point in mind.

It was in this mode of thinking that I arrived to analyse the notion of becoming to determine its relative merit in examining the Irish community in Belgium. Here, the notion of contact with difference, through movement, is inextricably linked to the creation or augmentation of one’s new sense of belonging. This is acknowledged and argued in the following manner by Hall (1990):

There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'... Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. (Hall 1990: 225)

Cultural identity is deployed in Hall to signify that difference is also bound to a becoming, the future, the possibility of the current situation not being so. Being Irish, we might argue, has as much to do with the condition of one's birth as it has to do with how we might become something else, through acts of mobility. What is so keenly observed by Hall too is that how we think of significant difference is always bound up with our cultural identity; constructing one's identity is not possible as a one-stop shop, even though it has a definite history and significance. The matter of who one is can change as new circumstances evolve or if we engage in acts of mobility. Thinking in this wise should allow us to avoid the felt necessity to have the last word on what Irishness is and who this category expressly excludes.

Concerning both the topic of European identity and becoming specifically, we can turn to Bellier and Wilson (2000) who also restate the importance of the notion of becoming if one is to capture the manner in which European identity can be understood at all:

European identity is about 'being' as much as about 'becoming' European, in that surveys, ethnographic research, inferences from a variety of scholarly studies, and just plain common sense all agree that the people of the EU recognise that they are European by culture, tradition and heritage, but they are also in the process of becoming something new, also European, depending on the course which the EU takes, and the path which their Member State takes in reaction and adaptation. (Bellier and Wilson 2000: 139)

Agreeing with Bellier and Wilson, I believe that the process of becoming ought to be viewed as a metaphor of sorts. The notion of becoming allows us to think of our identities and subject positions in terms of change with respect to mobility and over time. The following section

is dedicated to providing a more robust examination of the notion of becoming, and how it has been received in anthropology.

It is not hard to see why Gilles Deleuze's postulation of the importance of the idea of becoming has had a significant effect on anthropology and in mobility studies more generally. He has been the subject of a recent work on *Deleuze and the Anthropology of becoming* in which two anthropologists, Biehl and Locke, attempt to transmit his work's importance to ethnography:

In emphasizing the powers and potentials of desire (both creative and destructive), the ways in which social fields ceaselessly leak and transform (power and knowledge notwithstanding), and the in-between, plastic, and ever-unfinished nature of *a* life, Deleuze lends himself to inspiring ethnographic efforts to illuminate the dynamism of the everyday and the literality and singularity of human becomings. (Biehl and Locke 2010: 317. Emphasis in original)

Understanding the transformation of the social field, how agents within particular fields change it and how they become changed in turn by it, is central to understanding how the dual notions of Ireland and Europe interact and play off of one another in the context of Belgium. On the more microscopic level, encountering difference, and its parenthetical relation to the viewpoint adopted by the subject with respect to that difference, is central to understanding both the manner in which the Irish 'community' abroad might be thought of as having become Europeanised and the manner in which the receptivity to the differences is evoked and represented by that same group. Becoming is a significant motivating force in this process, particularly in the process of Europeanisation and in how intra-European citizens become European. In the section that follows, the precise role played by mobility in the constitution of European citizenship is examined.

How is it that the notion of becoming allows for new social configurations to take place within and beyond the interstices of Irishness and Europeanness specifically? Taking a philosophical view, becoming departs from a point that it alters through its departure, is not defined exclusively in that manner; this can help us to carve out a model that is not contingent on one place and one's departure therefrom, a theoretical difficulty we encountered previously. A homeland's relevance to someone can wax and wane, something well illustrated in the notion of becoming.

Becoming has a trajectory that is indeterminable in advance and is not reducible or synonymous with being as such. What I mean by this can be exemplified in the Sorites paradox, in which grains are removed from a 'heap' of sand and we are asked to ponder when this 'heap' stops being a 'heap' and becomes, instead, a mound or small pile. Rather than being a simple logic problem or language game, what is really being cast into doubt in the Sorites paradox is the unambiguous determinacy with which we treat so many things, as though they were fixed in time and space. Deleuze offers us the prospect of moving away from fixist understandings of identity, to examine lives lived in a sense that are not oriented or collapsible to one point along a line. Although it is an unusual argument, it has proven the perfect talisman when studying the mobile lives of the Irish community in Brussels. Deleuze and Guattari contend:

A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived... a point is always a point of origin. But a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 323)

By using Deleuze and Guattari's thinking, we get to move away from the fixist, origin-establishing entity of the nation state and can better understand and theorise a becoming that is not solely contingent. This contingency does not rest either on notions of one's origin, nor is it dependant or derivative of those things from which they once drew their meaning. Here, we can see how we might better understand the mutually overlapping influences of grand forces and identities in how we view ourselves and the degree to which becoming is a useful tool in this exercise. How this becoming is thought in terms of one's belonging in Europe, or Europeanisation, is examined in the following section, an examination of which will serve as an excellent backdrop for understanding how the Irish community in Belgium are thought to have become Europeanised.

MOBILISING EUROPE: ALTERITY AND ACTIVITY

Europeanisation, as we have examined it previously, is the process by which the different contexts presented by other Member States are experienced and managed and which would, ideally, lead to a European

demos—one which sees beyond difference to sameness. Mobility is the lynchpin to the process of Europeanisation, according to Aradau et al. (2010), and is one which attempts to posit that difference, once encountered by way of mobility, is actually a manifestation of a latent or dormant similarity. This is recognised within the EU’s own motto ‘Unity within Diversity’ and is examined in Macdonald (1993). We can observe the importance of mobility, through the free movement of labour capital, by returning to the claim made by Aradau et al.:

...[C]itizenship rights in the Union are primarily activated through practices of free movement, rendering the mobility of citizens central to the effective institution of European Citizenship. European citizenship, it would seem, is marked by a deep-rooted tension between nationality and free movement. (Aradau et al. 2010: 946)

‘Europe’, which involves the collapsing of the notion of Europe as a geographical space and the European Union as a political entity, can be theorised by anthropologists among mobile populations. It is also important to stress the tension that exists between one’s own national identity and belonging in (and to) other Member States of the European Union. How might we better theorise this shift of allegiances or this ‘becoming European’? This is a topic to which the following section is dedicated.

Engaging in free movement among different Member States of the EU is experienced by interlocutors who are said, by way of the ‘contact hypothesis’ (Deutsch et al. 1957), to encounter differences among Europeans first and then similarity thereafter; this is thought to lead to a ‘we-feeling’ among ‘fellow’ Europeans. Actual uptake in intra-European migration is quite low, though, with only 1.3 million citizens from one Member State moving to another within the EU in 2016.⁸ Given the importance of intra-European mobility within the labour market to the EU’s self-definition, there is a swathe of citizenship rights that go along with intra-EU mobility. From the point of view of citizenship rights at least, moving within and between Europe allows rights to be eked out at a level which supersedes national governments:

Thus, European citizenship is a direct relationship between Citizens and European Institutions, but certain aspects of this relationship are only activated when these citizens are outside of their own Member States. Thus, European Citizenship in terms of voting rights is only open to

those nationals settled in another member state. European Citizenship is at the same time a mediated relationship between citizen and European Institutions, through the implementation of European Directives by national governments and because only member-states national are Union citizens. (Neveu 2000: 124)

The inability to go beyond one's national, governmentally inscribed sense of belonging also makes European identity a supplementary one necessarily, as has been stated. This is thought to occur by taking one Member State's national identity, within the context of their exposure to European difference, and putting it against the backdrop of the process of intra-European mobility.

My purpose in pursuing an aim of this kind is not to establish a litmus test as to whether the people who undergo processes of transnational mobility become what can adequately and accurately be described as truly, fully fledged 'Europeans' proper, but is one which attempts to unpack Europeanisation as a process and by examining it as a force, by efforts taken to Europeanise, and not as a foregone conclusion. Cris Shore (2001a) errs in overstating the already existing category of 'European'. This error comes about because he neglects to state, in any of his fieldwork interviews, what individual nationality the Eurocrats among whom he worked identified as. This approach is a curious blend of affirming the relative merit of mobility as a requirement for European identification and, thereafter, a subsequent exposition of the merits of mobility at the regional, parochial level in order to become a self-identifying European subject. The notion that once mobility has been engaged in then that group or foreign element must be known thereafter in one, monadic fashion is also examined by Drakakis-Smith:

[M]obility could be more (and less) than a life-stage choice with far-reaching implications for norms and values which could endure even when travelling ceased and which could come to define the individual indefinitely. (Drakakis-Smith 2007: 470)

Rather than a 'be all or end all', mobility might be construed as being a phenomenon which can be regimented to entirely differing degrees and extents (Salazar and Glick-Schiller 2014). Verstraete (2010) has contended that the efforts of consciousness-raising (described above, concerning Europeanisation) and the activation of rights occur through acts of European border-making. The European Union acknowledges its own

populous by, parenthetically, prescribing illegality upon the Other, and this comes to affect the manner through which mobility is undertaken and experienced. The regulation of mobility, she contends, is performed by the pooling of power by national sovereignties to the outer limits of the European Union. She writes:

This contradictory notion of unlimited mobility marked by the borders of white capitalist nation-state serves a triple function: generalizing the national subject's position as a European citizen, expanding national sovereignty to the external borders of the EU; and protecting the EU's national differences over the admission of migrants and refugees onto non-European others, people who cannot enter European space other than illegally, as criminals. (Verstraete 2010: 16)

Here, the outer limits of migration are set as the outer limits of the possibility of Europeanisation; the Member States' national identities are protected from the non-European Other by dint of their belonging to the European Union.

In order to close this summary section on the variety of roles played by mobility within the construction and postulation of European identity, it may be necessary to reduce the phenomenon at hand, that is the construction of 'Europe' as a conglomeration of its Member States which occupies a certain delimited space, to a concept-metaphor. I have attempted to demonstrate this through Fig. 2.1, provided above. Any effort to reduce a phenomenon as complex as Europe incurs the conflation of two different ideas that lie along the dividing lines of the European Union and the composition of countries of which it is comprised. Speaking directly to this point, Perry Anderson remarks:

Europe, as it has become more integrated, has also become more difficult to write about. The Union that now stretches from Limerick to Nicosia has given the continent an encompassing institutional framework of famous complexity, over-arching the nations that compose it, that sets this part of the world off from any other. This structure is so novel, and in many respects so imposing, that the term 'Europe', as currently used, now often refers simply to the EU, as if the two were interchangeable. But, of course, they are not. (Anderson 2009: xi)

While it is Anderson's position that the equation of the two terms is an erroneous venture, it does allow us to acknowledge that 'Europe', with

respect to its identity politics, is something that can be a jumping-off point from which broader complexities and institutional frameworks can occur. This is, of course, provided that we do not equate the two notions. Anderson's reading, I contend, pays little regard to the way in which notions of 'Europe' compete and contradict each other or are concerned either with the fashion in which it is employed or the senses in which it is meant, whether erroneously or otherwise. How is it that the notion of Europe is both so obvious and so mysterious at the same time? In order to address this sub-question, I wish to turn to the idea of concept-metaphors, which is how we can talk about anything complex in simple terms at all. This should never let us become complacent though; concept-metaphors become different, are contested and their meanings shift often.

IRELAND AND EUROPE: CONCEPT-METAPHORS

By now, we have examined a diffuse range of ideas, from identity to belonging and becoming and about Ireland and Europe. What was baffling, in the early phase of this research project at least, was the fluency with which people were able to drop these mega-themes into conversation.⁹ Providing an analysis that does justice to the complexities of these issues is an altogether different issue though. Given that we employ shorthand conceptual stopgaps so frequently, such as those mentioned above, a specific theoretical step had to be taken in the direction of acknowledging the sheer depth of the issues examined. To that end, I have employed Henrietta Moore's notion of concept-metaphors which is an incredibly elegant way of reconciling how we think and speak of irreducibly complex phenomena, but also how we might treat them in anthropological work. One minor example we might give at the outset is the notion of community; I have already spent a great deal of time examining how the notion takes on different meanings over time and in unpacking it. At other times, when discussing my work with informants, I would mention that I was examining the Irish community in Brussels and the concept seemed sufficiently transparent to proceed without further questioning.

Concept-metaphors (Moore 2004)¹⁰ occupy an ideological half-way house in which we get to apply certain meaning to particular macroscale entities or notions. The employment of 'conceptual-metaphors' is also very common. Moore (2004) writes:

Concept metaphors¹¹ like global, gender, the self and the body are a kind of conceptual shorthand, both for anthropologists and others [...]. Concept-Metaphors are examples of catachresis, i.e. they are metaphors that have no adequate referent. Their exact meanings can never be stated in advance- although they can be defined in practices and in context- and there is a part of them that remains outside of or exceeds representation. Concept-metaphors are, of course, as important to science as they are for social science: think for example of the notion of the mind. At such a stage their existence is posited and not proven. (Moore 2004: 73)

What concept-metaphors allow us to examine is the contextual garb in which irreducibly complex phenomena are clothed, imagined, understood, which vary widely and which are cultural in nature. The latitude that understanding concept-metaphors affords us, in terms of differences in the way in which the encounter plays itself out on the macro-social scale, is well suited to a project which is evidence-supported, inductive and which relies on the experiences of those who have undergone this phenomenon first-hand. While it allows for claims by participants to reduce a phenomenon as complex as a country to a word, this act of reduction will be borne in mind.

‘Concept-metaphors’ are not exactly a new phenomenon to social sciences either, though I contend that Moore’s exposition on what they consist of is particularly well put. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) had previously equated culture, metaphor and conceptual apparatus:

The conceptual systems of cultures and religions are metaphorical in nature. Symbolic metonymies are critical links between everyday experience and the coherent metaphorical systems that characterize religions and cultures. Symbolic metonymies that are grounded in our physical experience provide an essential means of comprehending religious and cultural concepts. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 41)

Two interesting facets emerge upon the invocation of concept-metaphors; the first is that a certain democratic step is taken, in recognising that conceptual-metaphors can contain a particular individual’s social disposition in relation to certain phenomena, which provides a profound insight into the matter being studied. The second benefit, which stems from the employment of concept-metaphors, is that it sustains the notion that by being shared, there can be no final or static conception

even upon one notion. The sharedness of certain concepts prevents a monopoly, a drawing of the line in sand or the idea that one individual can have the last word on a topic as vast as those captured by concept-metaphors. There is an interesting parallel to be drawn here with the notion of culture more generally, not as a single entity, but as something dynamic and co-created and ongoing:

It is not 'a culture' which possesses a total repertoire of things known, but rather individuals who create and possess an ongoing multitude of diverse discrepant knowledges in their animation and use of thoroughly malleable matter of cultural symbols and discourses. (Rapport 1999: 94)

No one owns culture, as Rapport reminds us, nor can anyone have a dominion over how it might be interpreted. Anthropology takes this view to heart by following many participants' views on a particular phenomenon and will only seldom rely on the testimony of one or two individuals. This sharedness also extends to the results of social scientific investigations more generally; it should serve as a reminder to academic practitioners that jargon should be avoided, where possible, in order not to foreclose certain avenues of a kind of shared accessibility that concepts should have. The perceived necessity of the evasion of jargon has been documented many times elsewhere (Das 1998; D'Andrade 2000) and most recently, and very vituperatively, by Fischer in response to the influence of Deleuze on the practice of Anthropology (Biehl and Locke 2010).

Every idea is subject to paradigmatic shifts in its meaning (such as in the mobilities paradigm) and, therefore, to a kind of supplementation over time. In this sense, ideas are also negotiated and shared.¹² Accounting for difference over time is an imperative to anthropology because it is not generally considered to be a discipline whereby models are brought in from a top-down perspective to bear on local contexts in order to determine whether the people fit the theoretical mould.

One innocuous comparison can be observed in the narrow equation of a person's European belonging in terms of a sufficient knowledge of the *Acquis Communautaire*.¹³ How Europeanised someone is could be viewed as a conversational fluency in matters pertaining to European governance, policy decisions or future directions that the European Union might take. What is important to bear in mind here is the ongoing nature of this process of becoming; it could be argued that Ireland

has oscillated in this domain, in terms of its Europositivity, followed by a certain Euroscepticism to a hesitant wait-and-see moment in terms of the outcomes of the UK's departure from the EU. This topic, specifically what comprises a 'good European', is examined in the section that follows.

MacDonald (2004) accuses Shore and Abeles (2004), cited above, of making exactly this kind of error (insufficient regard to *ongoing* conceptual-metaphorical conversations) by not paying attention to the official European discourses proffered by Eurocrats themselves:

Shore is right to suggest that anthropologists might ask 'What exactly is the EU and what is it for?', but this is a question asked also by EU officials. If we want to ask this question anthropologically, we will need to ask it in a rather more fundamental way than he allows. (MacDonald 2004: 24)

I believe the fundamental component of the questioning angle that MacDonald wishes to adopt must reside in the examination of the macro-processes of identity politics, understood through conceptual-metaphorical shorthand, in terms of the interplay of one's 'home' identity and how this identity becomes (or does not become) different while overseas.

I wish to go one step further by taking European identity as a point from which broader lived contexts and processes of identity (re)formation can occur. Therefore, I contend that the notion of how concept-metaphors change and become supplemented through acts of mobility is the exact brand or fundamental manner through which to address the question of European identity as it is formulated here. What follows is a brief examination of how the concept-metaphors of Ireland and Europe can help us to better understand the relationship between the two entities and provides a brief overview of their interrelationship with respect to issues of integration.

WHAT IS A 'GOOD EUROPEAN'?

Is the matter of belonging to Europe, at the conceptual-metaphorical level, something that becomes different over time? This is the question to which this section is addressed. My intention here is only to demonstrate that the information, concerning the nature of European belonging at the national level, is often both more supplemental and provisional than many theorists suggest. Instead, we are left, from the literature,

with a variety of scenarios that include the possibilities that European identity proper exists, is hopelessly doomed to failure for reasons concerning regional and sub-regional cultural differences or is an idea whose time has not yet arrived, due to the novelty of the type of supranational entity that the European Union comprises. I believe that it is wise to examine one specific incident in which the posited-and-not-yet-proven category, which constitutes concept-metaphors as we have established, can be examined with respect to efforts undertaken regarding European integration in Ireland at the macro-perceptual level. Borneman and Fowler write:

All prospective members are considered juvenile, if not actively infantilised, by their Western relatives and must undergo a probationary period of Europeanization before being ostensibly adopted by the family. (Borneman and Fowler 1997: 496)

Although the quoted tract is aimed at ex-Eastern Bloc countries (indicated by the invocation of their Western relatives), this critique is evidenced fully in Ireland's voting habits in 2001 and again in 2008. Ireland, being the Westernmost country of the EU, was certainly infantilised after failing the passing of the Treaty of Nice in 2001. Hellstrom (2003), writing on the trouble experienced during the ratification of the Nice treaty, which concerned the development of eastward European expansion, first drew anthropological attention to the Irish predicament and to their 'no' vote:

The Irish "no" was not considered to be an expression of political resentment that could impinge on further development of European integration, but rather a sign of an information deficit. According to the EU top down rhetoric, the Irish people had not yet realised what it means to be Europeans in Europe. (Hellstrom 2003: 123)

The contradictions thrown up by the refusal to sign the initial 'Nice treaty', in June 2001, served to bring Ireland to the European Union's attention. The Irish, simply put, were not educated sufficiently or exposed to the virtues European Identity enough to vote 'correctly'. The Nice treaty was successfully ratified following a second referendum, held in October 2002. Irish voters also voted in a manner not in keeping with official discourses of European expansion when they failed to ratify the Lisbon treaty, a treaty aimed at improving the democratic efficiency and

legitimacy of the Union, in 2008. It appears that the Irish were still some distance away from being ‘European’. The treaty was ratified by the holding of another, second referendum held in 2009.

Further analyses of Ireland’s broader relationship with the European Union, including its voting record, can be found elsewhere (see Augustijn 2004; Bartley and Kitchin 2007; Brown 2010; Kuhling and Keohane 2007; Laffan and O’ Mahoney 2008). To what extent are these views formed, altered, constituted or reshaped by engaging in mobility which is thought to bring forth the subject position conventionally understood as the European Citizen? To what extent might the ‘citizen’ be thought of as being one thing? These exact questions are well-suited to anthropological investigations that seek to pose these questions to people, and this exact case has been made previously to the European Commission in a paper entitled: *Anthropological perspectives in a changing Europe: ‘bringing people in’* (EUCOM 2009):

[A]nthropology’s specificities, and in particular its methodology, can contribute greatly to the issues around the European project by shedding light on the behaviour of its main focus and *raison d’être*: The European citizen. In fact, what matters the most to this discipline is to bring in the local, the particularistic, the critical reflection, the context, the elements of comparison and most of all the **people!** (EUCOM 2009: 19. Emboldened text in original)

There is a definite necessity to re-embed the experiences of European citizens, among whom students, intra-Europe migrants and Eurocrats are examples *par excellence*, into the broader capitulation and generality of the abstract figure of the European subject. To that end, the Irish people who reside in Belgium are the specific subject of the next and final section of this chapter.

THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN BELGIUM

To address the manner in which the Irish community abroad encounter their fellow Europeans *in situ* and to ground the question of belonging, such that it can be assessed and examined, the population examined in this work were members of the Irish community in Belgium. This section aims to provide a rough outline of their composition and relative location in Belgium. As mentioned in the introduction, Belgium represents an overlooked microcosm as well as a significant port of call for many

Irish people. It also stands in stark contrast to the primary destinations that Irish people follow, i.e. to Anglophone countries such as the UK, Australia and North America. Moreover, not much has been written on the topic of Irish migrants to Belgium in the twenty-first century and the reason for that may be quite simple to explain; it involves Belgium's proximity to Ireland, as we have touched upon previously. In other words, their closeness to one another (and their parenthetically assumed similarity to one another) has failed to capture the interest of many scholars. Cronin (2008) writes:

The permanent move to Canada but not the sojourn to Sicily, the emigrants' letters home from Australia, but not the visit to Berlin, become objects of critical inquiry. Irrevocability risks becoming a talisman of authenticity (real travel [exile] v. superficial travel [tourism]) and concentration on the Irish in New Communities may narrow the world to encounters with varieties of Anglophone Irishness and neglect individual Irish experiences of a multi-lingual and multicultural planet. (Cronin 2008)

Examining this particular community in Europe, therefore, is intended to occupy both the lacunae that stem from the tendency to examine the Irish community abroad in Anglophone countries solely, as identified by Cronin, and to re-'people' discourses conventionally occupied by political scientists. The number of emigrants from Ireland for the 12 months spanning April 2012 to April 2013 was 89,000, of which 50,900 were estimated to have been born in Ireland and which includes children of non-Irish migrants. The determination of whether or not these children were citizens of Ireland is made more complicated in the wake of the 27th amendment to the Irish constitution, passed in 2004, and which limited access to citizenship by birthright.¹⁴ Of the 50,900, it is estimated that slightly fewer than one in ten went to an EU 15 country (denoting countries who were a member of the European community prior to the expansion which took place in 2004¹⁵).

Estimates of the Irish population in Belgium can go as high as 10,000 for the turn of the century (Harvey 1999). A higher figure still is often circulated among the Eurocrats working in the Irish Permanent Representation to the European Union, and the figure 15,000 is believed to be an accurate estimate which extrapolates upon Harvey's figure. These estimates pale in comparison with the figure put out in

official advertising for the Gathering in 2013, which claimed that the Irish community in Belgium counted 400,000 people. What follows is an overview of statistics graciously given to me by the Belgian government, with a very Belgian manner of explaining the necessity for the bureaucratic breakdown of citizenship types.

Statbel (the Belgian statistical agency) has made the most accurate and up-to-date figures available to the project. The first remark concerns the breakdown of the figures provided; the Irish population are splintered into three groups by Statbel. In terms of citizenship status, there are those who are ‘foreigners’ in Belgium (no citizenship), ‘immigrants’ who have acquired citizenship, but were born overseas and, finally, ‘Belgians of foreign origins’ who are born in Belgium but do not have Belgian nationality:

1. Foreigners: Irish people living in Belgium with no Belgian nationality, but could be born in Belgium with Irish citizenship, they did not necessarily move (Irish **citizenship** is what defines this group). For our purposes, these are: *Current Nationality Irish* of which there are 4216.
2. Immigrants: Irish people born in Ireland who moved to Belgium and can have Belgian nationality, but need not for categorisation purposes (the fact that they have **moved** defines this group). For our purposes, these are: *Country of birth=Ireland* of which there are 3381.
3. Belgians of foreign origin: born in Belgium with Irish citizenship, but became Belgian in the interim (the **change of nationality** defines this group).¹⁶ For our purposes, these are: *First Nationality Irish* of which there are 4338.

One outstanding feature of the distinctions between types of citizen is that there exists a possibility of an overlap between the second and third categories. This should be borne in mind when examining the features of the latter two groups, but the exact amount of overlap is indeterminable. When taken together, the Irish community in Belgium is currently 11,935.

Walter et al.’s study (2002) *A study of the existing sources of information and analysis about Irish emigrants and Irish communities abroad* is illuminating for a different reason; namely, that of the 20-page strong

list of academic works, citations and references, only 4 concern the Irish community in, what is termed, the 'Rest of EU'. The migrant profile in the aforementioned study is drawn in the following manner:

Although there have been close connections between Ireland and European countries other than Britain for centuries, migration for employment on a significant scale is a very recent phenomenon. It belongs clearly to the latest economic phase of emigration, that of global mobility, and is in striking contrast to the social model of movement 'from the known to the known'. (Walter et al. 2002)

The conclusion that can be drawn, therefore, is that while mobility and emigration are not new phenomena, and that there has been an increase in the former and decrease in the latter over time, the scale and pace at which they are occurring is unprecedented. It would be difficult to conclude whether Europeanisation or globalisation (in the senses espoused in Harvey 1989; Giddens 1990; and examined anthropologically in Inda and Rosaldo 2008¹⁷) can be ascribed as being the sole cause for this increasing trend; however, given the notion that Irish emigration occurs along transnational paths that move from the 'known to the known', we might logically conclude that it is simply the acceleration of older formations of emigration that is taking place:

Emigration of some members of the family has almost become part of the established custom of the people in certain areas – a part of the generally accepted pattern of life. For very many emigrants there was a traditional path 'from the known to the known', that is to say from areas where they lived to places where their friends and relations awaited them. (Commission on Emigration 1955: 137)

These movements, in bygone eras, trace a line of continuity from the known to the known and the Irish abroad now appear to be making new traces from the known into the unknown. The interpersonal character of arriving to a known, pre-established network is not always the case and nor is it required. Other social networks which can be viewed as postulating a sense of belonging can also become co-opted or joined to fulfil this function. The following section examines the Irish in Brussels, how the Irish moved from the known to the unknown, how this space became known over time and how this has been commemorated.

NOTES

1. This is identical to the overriding concern observed in the work of Zenker (2013), as has been examined in the previous chapter.
2. Europe, when placed between single quotation marks, is meant to connote the manner in which the term is meant at the European Union's own official discursive level. For more on this distinction, see Sassatelli (2002).
3. The idea of a litmus test for Irishness is examined in Chapter 5.
4. For a further examination of the democratic deficit, see Egenhoffer et al. (2009), Debomy (2011), and Leonard (2005).
5. I wish here to thank Raphael Ingelbien and Elke D'Hoker of the Faculty of Letters, KU Leuven for bringing this to my attention.
6. This might also be understood with respect to the fact that Joyce's continental focus became shaped and reshaped by economic necessity and the looming threat of warfare following the outbreak of the First World War. For a more elaborate discussion, see Orr (2008).
7. This is most succinctly expressed in Smith (2002) and well-critiqued in Guibernau (2004).
8. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics.
9. For more on mega-concepts, see Fabian (2012).
10. Concept-metaphors are employed in the work in order to adopt a position from which criticisms of the positionality of 'nativity' can be dealt; the rationale here is that there can be no undifferentiated conceptual notion from which the public at large and the researcher are at a remove—in my instance, it is simply a matter of degrees of familiarity.
11. Moore changes the spelling of concept-metaphors, as can be observed in this quote. The author has elected to include only the latter, hyphenated spelling for grammatical ease.
12. This can be demonstrated in the removal of the notion that homosexuality belonged in the 'Diagnostic Statisticians Manual' as a pathology. After public pressure was exerted, it was agreed that it would be removed from any future iterations of the DSM. This came to pass with the launch of the DSM IV and profoundly altered the manner in which homosexuality, as a concept-metaphor, was imagined and thought about.
13. The 'Acquis Communautaire' is a: 'French term refers to the body of legislation and guarantees between Member States as a result of the Treaty obligations, regulations and laws since the Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) entered into force in 1958' (Blair 2006: 79).

14. For a critical overview and commentary upon the effect this amendment had, see Brandi (2007) and Mancini and Finlay (2008).
15. For clarity's sake, they include: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Portugal.
16. The necessity for this categorisation stems from the nature of the statistics themselves. See: <http://www.myria.be/nl/publicaties/myriatics-2-immigrant-vreemdeling-of-belg-van-vreemde-origine>.
17. To be specific, that: 'the term describes a condition in which the rapid flow of capital, people, goods, images and ideologies across national boundaries continuously draws more of the world into webs of interconnectedness, thereby compressing our sense of time and space and making the world seem smaller and distances shorter' (Inda and Rosaldo 2008: 6).

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CHAPTER 3

The Irish in Brussels: Culture, Language, Politics, Belonging

This chapter intends to trace the contextual, social, political and historical developments of Ireland's accession to the European Union, then the ECSC, from 1973 to present. It offers an overview of the developments in the four and a half decades that precede it which have been deemed necessary to the understanding of Ireland's relationship to 'Europe'. To this end, it examines the specific events oriented towards the Irish community abroad, the difficulty in employing that term notwithstanding, as examined in the first chapter of this work. It offers an overview of the conditions by which Ireland is thought to derive a 'parity of esteem' from its peers and whose examination will allow us to probe, conversely, the way in which 'Europe' has become Hibernicised. The chapter provides an anthropologically sensitive account of these phenomena by relating the experience of the conceptual-metaphorical levels of Ireland and Europe to how they are experienced by Irish people who reside in Brussels.

The question of Ireland's 'becoming' European is our area of interest here and I begin by detailing an ethnographic vignette from my time conducting fieldwork in Brussels which excellently frames our discussion of becoming. It traces how wealth, eked out through employment in the European institutions, causes a rupture in the perception of one's Irishness. It is difficult to overstate the linkage between poverty and the perception of non-belonging to the European project, and this is a recurring theme throughout this chapter. While it might be possible to rhetorically suggest that the Irish community in Belgium is European simply

by dint of belonging to the European Union, this relationship is (and has been) a fractious one, a complicated jockeying of perceptions of imagined qualities.

Beginning from a position of relative poverty at accession, Ireland's GDP was only 40% of every other Member State, but rose to 110% of GDP within a period of 35 or so years.¹ Massive shifts have occurred in the manner in which Irish people are positioned within Brussels, as a broad spectrum of stakeholders, whose commentaries are included in this chapter. This chapter traces the way through which the construction of the Irish abroad in terms of categories of citizens (first as poor distant relatives, then as model citizens and then as Europeans to whom the concept of 'Europe' was not entirely clear—as established in the previous chapter) as well as examining the contexts in which the members of the community have found themselves. This is achieved by attempting to provide a ritual calendar of sorts which outlines events held annually and their salience to the Irish community in Brussels. It is only through an examination of this kind that it might be said that Brussels, subject as it is to being referred to using the term 'Europe', is undergoing a Europeanisation from within, one in which the Irish people play an active role.

Once the micro-scale example of how wealth reorients our belonging has been completed, I turn to the issue of how 'Europe' is articulated in Belgium by examining the 'European Schools', a topic which has received little academic scrutiny to date. This sentiment is echoed in *Europe in 12 lessons*, a work published in 2010 by former assistant to Jean Monnet, Pascal Fontaine. The work is structured in a pedagogical manner, given that it takes the form of lessons, but it also draws our attention to non-economic concerns. He writes:

A sense of belonging together and having a common destiny cannot be manufactured. It can only arise from a shared cultural awareness, which is why Europe needs to focus not just on economics but also on education, citizenship and culture. (Fontaine 2010: 55)

This chapter provides greater attention to the anthropological examination of what Fontaine, quoted above, is drawing our attention to in European education, specifically as it is practised in Brussels. This is achieved by providing vignettes and interview excerpts from my time working in one such school in Brussels.

Given Fontaine's assertion, ethnographic attention is also paid to the issues of culture and citizenship. This is done by examining how Irish culture is represented in Brussels, how accessible it is to outsiders and under what conditions it might be otherwise, as well as by examining the Irish community's involvement in initiatives such as European Movement International in which sameness and solidarity are scrutinised. To begin though, and as mentioned previously, I wish to begin with a vignette detailing a conversation about perceptions of Irishness and change over time that took place in the Brussels context as an informant relayed it to me.

(SPEAKING) IRISH IN BRUSSELS

My first introduction to the Brussels context was through an Irish speaking circle (Ciorcal Comhrá),² a slightly odd feature of life in Belgium abroad given the minimal extent to which it is spoken in Ireland. I was informed that it was brought about through the efforts of a limited number of Eurocrats who sought to speak Irish in Brussels outside of a work capacity and was founded in 2008. Since that time, the regular attendance of the group has both waxed and waned.³ The 'teaching' component of the evening served as a significant disincentive for more advanced speakers (and those who worked in the Irish language translation arm of the European Union), given the feeling that they had to pander. The current incarnation of the Ciorcal was actually revived by one such employee of the translation unit who profoundly rejects the claim that the Ciorcals are a waste of time, but instead lauds and encourages the desire to speak Irish, no matter the skill level of the participants.

No specific, designated table at which the group would meet was ever reserved for the circle officially with bar staff, and it was oftentimes difficult to determine whether or not any of the attendees had already arrived, due to the size of the venue. Irish speakers, interested in speaking Irish in their spare time, are a small but tightly-knit group. The very first 'Ciorcal' at which I was present comprised myself, Violet, Claire and Catalin. Violet had inherited the task of administrator of the event from her mother who worked in the European Commission. Violet was close in age to myself and was a fellow Dubliner who had lived in Brussels for five years. Dublin itself, then, was a common topic of conversation, and it took on a very specific quality of 'home' in conversations; once her longing for Dublin was so pronounced that she asked me not to speak

about it at all, following the birth of her child, due to her homesickness. At other times, she would derive a certain amount of fun out of speaking in Irish to the lounge staff to their frustration, in jest and often to their embarrassment.

The Ciorcal Comhrá lasts for about two hours with those who wish to further practise their Irish staying on later. It was through conversations that occurred after the official event that I came to know the people who volunteered their time and whose responses to my research-related question are detailed in the chapters that follow. One evening, after a particularly poorly attended meeting, Violet and myself were brainstorming ideas about how to make the group more palatable to a wider audience when the conversation veered off to the topic of the Irish in Brussels more generally. Violet was slightly frustrated with the lack of desire among the Irish to speak the language, in any capacity and to any degree possible, and she attributed this to a kind of change that she thought was happening to the Irish people who lived in Belgium. She claimed that they were becoming something else.

I returned with two pints of Guinness and Violet had just finished a phone call with her Belgian partner. In this instance, she began to speak about someone in her mother's peer group whom she had overheard pining for authentic Irish kippers, a thing that she did not believe existed in the strictest sense. She began to discuss what brought about this change, as she perceived it, and how it manifested itself among the Irish in 'Europe'. She did so by mockingly characterising how Irish people imagined their homeland many years after their arrival in Brussels; specifically, she was wondering why it was that they sought out foodstuffs they claimed to long for, but which actually had no apparent or strong connotative associations with Ireland that Violet could see:

V: Kippers? I mean kippers, *really*- What kind of Irish person after all that time (in Belgium, ed.) wants Kippers? Like there're authentic Irish Kippers. And that's not even the worst part- Have you been back there? (Recently, Ed.)

I: No

V: It's all Ireland, all of the time. It's actually too much. And everything is all: how are things going in Europe, for Ireland. We're talking to an Irish person now from Ireland who has a view on Ireland. It's straight-jacketing. I mean do you have Belgian people walk up to you and say: Hi! We have the best chips, beer and fish- We are a great lookin'

bunch of people and by the way, while I have you, we invented the comic book, the big bang, the steering wheel and the saxophone and they don't go around talking about themselves all of the time because they're f*ckin' classy. (Violet)

Violet's concern struck me immediately. What exactly were the Irish, working both within and outside the European institutions, becoming in Brussels? To what extent was it possible to understand the trajectory of Ireland's involvement in 'Europe' such that, even decades after accession, an Irishness that was real, imagined or fictive remained at the forefront of daily life? What conveyances existed in Brussels for the Irish to express their belonging or their imagined 'Irishness' and what was the manner through which a European supplementary component was being advocated?

What the interaction left me with was the felt necessity to further pursue an examination of forums and venues in which a brand of European Irishness is being posited, or an Irish brand of Europeanness, but also the desire to further scrutinise how this becoming could be observed historically. The section that follows is another ethnographic slice of life from a European school in Brussels, a context from which I believed I would ascertain a clearer vantage point on the dual concerns of Irishness and Europeanness.

SCHOOLING EUROPEANS

In January of 2013, I received a job offer at a European school⁴ in under less than desirable circumstances; one of the Irish teacher's husbands had passed away suddenly of a massive heart attack. My name had been put forward by another Irish member of staff (we had met previously at a function held in the 'Leuven institute for Ireland in Europe'), and I was offered the opportunity to interview for the position on a temporary basis. I graciously accepted the position on the 23rd of January with the view to beginning the following week.

I started on the afternoon of the 29th of January and made my way through the multi-storey school, which was bustling with throngs of students speaking a wide variety of languages, on through to the staff canteen. Once there, I was stricken by the axes along which the teaching staff were divided; to the right of the entrance lay the Francophones and to the left were the Anglophones. Over time I began to recognise

individual tables at which sat Swedes, Spaniards, Germans, Portuguese teachers and so on. I was invited by name to sit at a sizeable table off to the left which was comprised of teachers from England and Ireland. I was greeted warmly and the staff made a point of thanking me for 'stepping in at the last minute' and was told that the teacher, whom I was replacing, was grateful that I could take her classes. The canteen was a large, well-lit room with a shuttered-off cafeteria, run by largely Flemish-speaking staff, and I was taken to get a coffee and introduced to every Anglophone member of staff individually.

The structure of the European school system, as I was told, was such that students had to opt to learn subjects through a language other than their native/mother tongue; what this meant in practice was that teachers would give classes through English on history, the human sciences or the natural sciences to students for whom it was their second language or L2.⁵ The Irish language was regarded as an 'Other national language', among which also included the languages referred to collectively as 'the Baltics'; this meant that classes had to be given in a language recognised as being among the recognised modern languages of the European Union. The content I presented to these Irish classes closely resembled that of the Irish classes I gave to students in Leuven, examined elsewhere in this work, and the class sizes were very small (the lowest number of students was 2 and the greatest was 4).

The European school was founded with the view to educating the offspring of personnel working within any of the European institutions, but which also has an increasing number of fee-paying students.⁶ The curriculum is based around the 'European Baccalaureate', which is recognised by each of the Member States' governing bodies. Official literature on the topic tends particularly to emphasise language acquisition as a *sine qua non* of Europeanness. The requirement to undertake an education in a language other than your own was also thought to give rise to something like a 'European' point of view—rather than to the creation of a European citizenry—something I was told often by the staff. Not long after I had arrived, and realising that this temporary teaching position had presented an opportunity through which to do fieldwork, I began to ask what the word 'European' in European School meant, language acquisition notwithstanding. To this end, and with the assistance of very busy Irish staff members, I began to formally interview some of the Irish staff members, of whom 5 graciously volunteered their time, and I took

field notes with permission. Many participants offered their time whenever they had a break between periods, a time at which they would usually correct examinations, learn French or ‘have the banter’ in the staff canteen.

What was clear, even in conversation, was that each of the staff members had their own take on what the European component of the school’s name meant. I first addressed this to Joy, a woman in her mid-fifties who was the first to bring to my attention to a small smoking area which was far away from the prying eyes of students. We chatted and smoked and spoke candidly about the necessity of the idea of ‘Europe’ in terms of an economic immediacy.

You look at Ireland and you think: wow, that’s small. And then you fit that into Europe the continent and you think okay. But then you look at any of the booming economies overseas and they’re really massive. I mean huge, and you think like I don’t think we can go it alone any more. We need to be in this together or get lost. When I think of a Europe that’s bound together that’s what I think of immediately; that it’s important and that it’s necessary. (Joy)

Joy was a ‘detaché’ which meant that she had been seconded by the Irish government, eligibility for which involves having taught for 6 years in Ireland, after having applied for an open call. She was elegantly dressed and well-spoken and was quite convinced that, even though she was a history teacher, that the bedrock of a ‘European’ sameness derives itself from economic necessity, rather than the rousing of a dormant body of self-identifying citizens. She also spoke often of the Ireland she grew up in, which she thought was too replete with religiosity, and she spoke of Ireland’s boom times as having liberated it somewhat. She was also immensely helpful as a gatekeeper and sought people out, without my realising it, to help me with my ‘project’.

Another staff member, Éoin, who actually put my name forward for consideration for the position, after having learned that I had given Irish classes in Leuven, also said that he would be happy to contribute. I interrupted, unknowingly, his French lesson after having been directed to his office one Tuesday afternoon. Éoin is from Dublin, his wife travels back to Ireland every 2 weeks, ‘it’s that close’, and he was reaching retirement age. He was sharply dressed and warm. When asked what it was that he thought the word ‘Europe’ meant in the context of the school,

and whether he thought it was an ethos, a category of citizenship in the strict sense or a linguistic commonality; he also made reference to the economic component thereof. Allowing his mind to wander, he told me a story of his purchasing a car recently which really struck him:

I was buying a car, and I had to do it quick because it won't be tax-free for too much longer (Éoin returned to Ireland with his wife in June of 2013) and it was the first time that, I mean I think the guy thought to himself "this guy is a European so I can charge that bit more". I think he saw me as something apart, which is harder to do in Ireland I think, or that I represented something to him. In any case, I felt a bit European then, because he saw me that way, and now I represented a man of means. (Éoin)

As well as the determination by the staff member at the car dealership, I believe the context of Éoin's contention was that having become European, or what allowed him to be likened to that of a 'European' was something which had been brought about, necessarily, by his wealth.

That wealth is a constitutive element of Europeanness is something with which this chapter is directly concerned. Taking its cue from the very brief time I spent at the European School, what follows is an attempt to trace the contours along which the Irish acceded to the European Union, were thought to belong, were 'good' citizens, came to adopt a Eurosceptical position and underwent crisis and whose remoteness from 'Europe' came to be seen as less of a dividing line as Ireland became prosperous. This is done by way of a variety of sources on the topic of the meaning of Irish accession to the European Union.

THE IRISH IN BRUSSELS, JANUARY 1973

Emily Hourican (2007), a journalist for *The Dubliner* magazine, wrote a piece entitled *The Irish in Belgium* which considers the experience of Irish Commissioners upon their first landing in Belgium:

The first Irish recruits arrived in Brussels as soon as we joined the common market in January 1973. A merry bunch, whole-heartedly delighted with the richness of the gravy train, they ignored the natives but soon took to life in Brussels. "It's far from this we were reared," they would chortle [...] (Hourican 2007: 15)

One way in which it might be claimed that the Irish ‘ignored natives’ could be through the foundation of a great deal of Irish pubs in Brussels and beyond. What is curious is the dualism in terms of distance that is evoked here; Ireland, at that time, is imagined as being a separate entity entirely from the other Member States in economic terms, which is evoked in terms of the largesse which was available in Brussels at that time, but it also evokes a distance in geographical terms. By the time my research project was undertaken, both meanings of felt-distance had utterly vanished. What became clear was that Brussels, as a field site, had come to lose some of its intimidating aura and that, at present at least, informants pointed to the propinquity of Ireland to Belgium, in terms of the lack of distance with respect to geography and matters of economy. The reason for the diminution of distance can be posited in terms of Ireland’s rapid economic growth, during a period known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’ (for a critical review, see Coulter and Coleman 2003), as well and equally in terms of the decline in airfare prices and an increase in discretionary expenditure.

Ireland’s economic independence is something of a recent phenomenon, and its relative poverty was constructed initially, prior to joining the EEC, as a stumbling block to their accession thereto. Another was the early speculation on the prospect of EEC membership, which was thought to bring about a more continental brand of European Solidarity as its *raison d’être*, can be found in Winston Churchill’s lecture in 1946 in Zurich on the necessity of a ‘United States of Europe’:

We British have our own Commonwealth of Nations. These do not weaken, on the contrary they strengthen, the world organization. They are in fact its main support. And why should there not be a European group which could give a sense of enlarged patriotism and common citizenship to the distracted peoples of this turbulent and mighty continent? And why should it not take its rightful place with other great groupings and help to shape the onward destinies of men? In order that this should be accomplished there must be an act of faith in which millions of families speaking many languages must consciously take part. (Churchill’s speech to the academic youth forum in Zurich, 1946⁷)

There is a detachment evident in the speech that while Churchill exclaims that we might ‘Let Europe arise’, it is a ‘Europe’ called into existence by mutually necessary ties which would bind France and

Germany, but not the UK. This is particularly interesting in the light of Brexit, which has been examined in the introduction to this work. There is, even as early as 1946, the inkling that European solidarity is a construction of a solely mainland-continental kind and which extends only as far as its Western seaboard, not further to the islands.

What occurred over the following period, and right up until the moment of Ireland's accession, is somewhat surplus to requirement in an analysis of this sort, but has been written about in Keogh (1997), Geary (2007) and Hoffman (1964). Suffice it to say that it was De Gaulle whose family, the Macartans, had Irish roots, who vetoed England's and Ireland's bids for membership citing the desire to avoid the construction of a more Atlantic vision of the European community.⁸ While the theme of whether or not Ireland is more likely to identify with America than Europe is a tension that is examined below, the overarching concern at that time was whether a community of six was preferable to a construct that required a more supranational focus, one separated by a sea:

[D]e Gaulle was deeply affected by the failure of his plan for a European political union, which had been torpedoed by the Benelux countries after months of discussions. Those countries, probably with the hope of forcing de Gaulle's hand, had insisted either on a supranational Europe of the Six or on an obviously not supranational political union including Britain. (Hoffman 1964: 12)

Supranationality is constructed as a commonality that is only thought to be in existence among spatially close regions. This postulation was overturned by newer economic models (an in-depth examination of which can be found in Cini and Perez-Solorzano Borragan [2010]) which suggest that the 'spillover' of elite loyalty would create the conditions of possibility for a supranational character among Member States; this Europe-wide solidarity would not depend on spatial proximity and so a 'Europe', which became broader than the continent proper, became theorisable. Europe became larger in size and scope from that time on.

The first expansion of the European Union since its foundation was the inclusion of Denmark, the UK and Ireland in 1973. This expansion brought questions to the fore about the exact composition of the European Economic Community which was oriented to two macro-social concerns, namely the economic and social ramifications of such an entity:

[T]wo earlier applications from the UK in 1961 and 1967 were vetoed by then President of France Charles De Gaulle. In 1961, de Gaulle argued that the accession of Great Britain would alter the nature of the European EC completely and lead to an Atlantic Community under American domination. In 1963 he raised concerns about economic weakness that could inhibit the economic development of the EC. (Schneider 2009: 13)

The perceived, or imagined, difference between Ireland and the other Member States seems to have less to do with a broader mismatch among and between them, but rather more to do with the economic character of each of the Member States concerned.⁹ Europe encountered expansion as, first and foremost, a political-economic issue rather than as a cultural one:

Did the arrival of new members alter the administrative culture or practices established under the Community of Six? The challenge was primarily political. It was linked to the relative economic poverty of Ireland, and to the persistence of a Eurosceptic opposition in Denmark and the United Kingdom. (Bussiere et al. 2013: 123)

Ireland's colonial relationship with Britain also typified a 'peripheral-core' relationship with Ireland's agricultural, exploitative and export-driven market which is thought to have allowed the Industrial Revolution to take place in Britain unimpeded. For example, in Regan's *Economic development in Ireland: The historical dimension* (2006) it is contended that:

In the period between 1650 and 1770, the Irish Bourgeoisie (composed mainly of landlords and some merchants) ceased to be potential competitors with their neighbours and Ireland became, by the end of this period, an agricultural province providing cheap foodstuffs and labour to fuel the Industrial revolution. The economy of the country had been rebuilt on an entirely new basis which, while providing relative prosperity for some merchants and landlords (and even some tenants), also created the basis for continuing crisis and contradiction which lasted well into the present century. (Regan 2006: 7)

The story of endemic underdevelopment in Ireland, and its parenthetical overreliance on the fluctuations of British markets, was viewed as one of the main benefits of EEC membership (Laffan 2010). Throwing

in their lot with a continental market helped to hedge the bets on the exporting of domestic products for which there was a desire overseas. This also gave rise to the desire for other exportable products not traditionally associated with Ireland, authentic Irish kippers as alluded to in the introductory vignette. The relationship to a broader common market was the original point of departure for an uncoupling of the centuries-old asymmetrical economic relationship between Ireland and England.¹⁰

HOW IRELAND BECAME EUROPEAN

With economic interdependence established, then, it was possible to formulate and to ensure a sense of cooperation within and among these now increasingly diffuse and geographically spread out Member States. The model from which a bedrock of solidarity was thought to emerge and be founded in further efforts at integration and interdependent cooperation which would take place over time. European identity (as it has been examined in the previous chapter) is only the most recent effort at integration which has now been superseded by more immediate economic concerns than worries over identification. The European Economic Community's base, economical structure had already been postulated and viewed in terms of the school of economics referred to as 'Neo-functional' economics, even as early as the 1950s; the term was coined by Ernst Haas to account for the ambitions of a small community of European countries who were consolidating various resources in order to stave off the then-present but now, according to Habermas (2013), totally exhausted possibility of warfare. The model aimed to account for the rise of intergovernmental cooperation in terms of shifts of loyalty (to the European Supranational concept and cause) and was thought to take place by way of a 'functional spillover'. Cini and Perez-Solorzano Borraran, whose account is taken to be authoritative in the sphere of European Union political integration theory, formulate it in the following manner:

Political spillover occurs in situations characterised by a more deliberated political process, where national elites or interest groups argue that supranational cooperation is needed in order to solve political problems. National interest groups focus more on European than on national

solutions and tend to shift their loyalty toward the supranational level. (Cini and Perez-Solorzano Borrigan 2010: 79)

The superabundance of political will, which is thought to arrive out of necessity and manifest itself as intergovernmental goodwill, has also been thought of as being the engine of European integration generally or of ‘engrenage’ as it is often referred to.¹¹ This supranational, super-structural model of economic interdependence has also been thought to allow for the conditions by which, in macro-economic commercial settings, reliance on interdependence is thought to give rise to feelings of solidarity.

Despite the falling in and out of favour of the model of neo-functionalism, there is an enduring appeal in the notion that neo-functional economics still holds, as evidenced in Shore (2001). Shore’s work is foundational in the field of ethnography on ‘Europe’, and he points to a pervading reliance on economic cooperation as giving rise to European solidarity:

Foremost among these themes [of Europeanist ideology, ed.] are its uncritical assumptions about harmony and consensus, its functionalist model of social cohesion, its belief in the moral superiority of supranationalism as a more ‘advanced’ system of governance, its unflinching optimism in ‘functional spillover’ and the enlightening power of *engrenage*. In this respect, ‘European construction’ is perhaps the last, and possibly the greatest of the Enlightenment grand narratives. (Shore 2001: 207, emphasis in original)

What I wish to delineate from Shore’s conclusion is an examination of the construction of supranational interdependence that gives rise to a common identity, which was thought to be a logical by-product thereof. The capacity of economic partnership giving rise to civil and social feelings of solidarity is the guise under which the social model, latent in the ambitions of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), had operated.

However, there is more to identification and identity than the simple acknowledgement of supranationalism’s superiority. The interplay between economics, emigration wealth and allegiance, through the prism of development, is examined in the following section. An examination of this kind also assists in determining the principles by which one Member States’ populous might be thought of as being European.

IRELAND'S DEVELOPMENT, FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY AND BACK

Garret Fitzgerald, former Taoiseach (transl. Prime Minister) on two occasions and active participant in European politics, wrote a volume which served as a retrospective on the occasion of Ireland's thirtieth year of EU membership. In it he claims that for Ireland, at heart, the rise in per capita GDP to the level comparable of other Member States in the European Union, which occurred in the last two decades of the previous century, was due in large part to emigration:

If, in the three-quarters of a century before the Great War, Ireland gained some ground economically, eventually achieving levels of national output and income that were about 60 percent of those of neighbouring Britain, this was largely a consequence of the socially inhuman process of exporting the large proportion of its people who were effectively destitute. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Ireland remained in roughly the same economic relationship that it had in 1914. (Fitzgerald 2005: 214)¹²

Emigration, then, can be viewed to have played a considerable role in facilitating the manner by which the Irish populace could be viewed as being among their European counterparts. This contention flies in the face of the analyses of community from the 1970s, as examined in Chapter 1, in which a community would fall into ruin through emigration. This is, in effect, the point of departure from which this chapter has arisen. What occurred to the Irish economy, whether as a direct outcome of increasing emigration or not, was the birth of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. Ireland's new-found wealth incurred a paradigmatic shift in relations to their (now more than ever) fellow Member States, namely that of an unenviable relation with respect to economic output to a country whose populace served as something of an aspirational role model:

[T]he Irish economy became a miracle economy in during the 1990s and was practically transformed, in half a decade, from one of the most peripheral and poorest regions of the European Union (EU) to a fully participating and wealthy member of the European core. Ireland became the 'Celtic tiger' of Europe, the place to emulate, what other peripheral countries should and *could* be. (O' Hearn 1998: x, emphasis in original)

Even here, O' Hearn alludes to a remoteness and peripherality that seem to have become more porous in composition through economic development. Wealth closes gaps, and peripherality is not a geographical limitation here, but rather an economic one. The actors who are thought to be most exposed to the benefits of European integration, arising from the felt-desire to aid and abet the expansion of the EU, are those working within the capacity of the European institutions and are the ones who are looked to as agents of change at the level of a Europeanisation from below.

This involves more than simply having the desire to sing the praises of European integration, with the end of involving the aloof, elusive democratic contingent which would imbue the working of the project of Europeanisation with legitimacy; the necessity to speak positively on matters concerning European integration is even codified into the European Commissioner's code of conduct.¹³ This manual clearly states that any extra-curricular, pedagogical or speaking engagements must concern itself with extolling the value inherent in the 'European interest'. Article 1.1 of the code of conduct for European Commissioners is as follows:

Commissioners may not engage in any other professional activity, whether gainful or not. Unpaid courses given from time to time in the interests of European integration and other communication activities on areas of European interest are the only outside activities that are permitted, and do not have to be declared. (EUCOM 2018: 3)

The shift in loyalty, experienced by top European brass, has been studied in many manners, and it is to one of these examples that I will turn in the section which follows. It must be said that this population was very reticent to speak to me, due in part to this restraint. One informant once said that they were happy to go on the record, but that all they could tell me was *that* they worked at the Commission, nothing more.

Ban (2007, 2008) has employed organisational studies, and the study of management to determine the impact that further enlargement has had on prospective European Commissioners, who work in the executive and legislative body of the European institutions, arriving from new Member States. Two strands which underpin the motivations why these Eurocrats sought to join the project of European enlargement are of interest here:

While many respondents saw this as a good career move or a way to work in an international setting, the most common response was actually that this was, in some way, a natural progression from their studies or their previous work inside their national government on accession... But a few people also saw working for the European institutions as a chance to represent their own country. As one person put it: My interest is in working for the European Union because I am interested in helping my country and representing my country. (Ban 2008: 7–8)

What emerges is the notion that European integration is something that requires that the boundaries of the nation state be exceeded and that only by being involved at the European level can one's own nation be represented. This is in keeping, broadly, with the spectre and scale of high modernity or postmodernity which requires that we think in a manner that is postnational and which exceeds the notion of bounded, individual, remote and discrete nation states working for a bounded and identifiable populous (Malkki 1992, 1994). This concern is shared by Favell (2003) who writes about the lack of determinism, concerning integration policies having dominion over individual nation state's affairs, as well as the lack of care being paid to the individual citizen whose desires may be more in keeping with the European project than with their own nation states:

But what of bottom-up studies: empirical work which focuses on the experiences, attitudes or social mobility of the immigrants or ethnic minority members themselves? Policy and institutional-based studies often have very little to say about actual migrant experiences... Clearly, this would be material close to the actual process of social change going on inside 'multicultural' nation-states; and, it might be thought, material more likely to reveal evidence of tendencies that are decomposing the conventional nation-state integration paradigm. (Favell 2003: 12)

Favell's appeal to a more ethnographically oriented work is well-founded. Elsewhere, in a prolegomena to a new research agenda within the sociology of the European Union, Favell writes that the agents for the decomposition of the nation state ideology, in place of a cosmopolite horizon which has yet to be fully articulated, are exactly these pioneers of European integration:

The low numbers of EU migrants may indeed be explained by the persistence of national 'cultural' barriers rooted in the preservation of welfare

protection [...] These ‘pioneers’ of an integrating Europe experience first-hand the invisible borders of European politics, embodying the possibility of social mobility while pointing to the immobile resilience of the European nation- state-society as the dominant organizational form. (Recchi and Favell 2009: 563)

Here, the individual EU migrant contains within themselves the possibility of advocating for the adoption of a more European perspective. This is perhaps preferable to the elite who is actively involved in its construction, even slightly dogmatically so in the instance of the European Commission, but who remain a valuable unit of analysis. Theirs is the voice which, it is thought, can speak to a broader set of experiences than those embodied by the occupant of one Member State who is believed to adhere more strictly to the nation state—prescribed model. Whether this model is of a more positive or negative kind though is also co-determined by the climate of receptivity to ‘Europe’ at home, and it is to this context that I will turn next.

EXPERIENCING EUROPE: IRISH CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Laffan (2010) pinpoints the emergence of a Eurosceptical consciousness, as something like a certain feeling of commonality which has developed over time and involves a certain palpable disagreement with the trajectory of ‘Europe’, as having occurred in Ireland in the year 2000. This was generated by the exact same elites who were thought to endeavour to further the efforts of European integration, rather than critiquing them; two events are appropriated in her argument to this end: the first is the reprimand handed down from the European Council to the Irish minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy for failing to implement anti-inflation measures to their full extent and the second is the entry into popular parlance of the Brussels/Boston dichotomy which was derived from a speech by then-Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht’s Síle De Valera, in Boston College. The speech commemorated the launching of a work by author Kevin Kenny on the topic of the ‘American Irish’ during which she remarked:

As the EEC developed into our European Community and later the European Union, decisions other than economic ones were taken. They seemed secondary at the time. But we have found that directives and

regulations agreed in Brussels can often seriously impinge on our identity, culture and traditions.¹⁴

Laffan remarks that this is the first occasion on which a Eurosceptical Irish viewpoint can be viewed and seems to be more indicative of Ireland's relationship with the European Union from the period extending from 2000 to 2010 and came at the expense of Ireland's prominent standing and reputation in Brussels. Laffan is quick to remind the reader that with Ireland's increasing global sway, as a direct consequence of the Celtic Tiger, it became possible to look beyond the budgetary transfers being made by the European Union (and with the declining reliance thereupon) speeches and discourses emerged which were typified as being softly-Eurosceptical.¹⁵ The Irish response to the Nice treaty,¹⁶ which required an amendment to be made to the Irish constitution, was hailed as being indicative of exactly this problem, and of European governance in general, and four months after the non-ratification the European Commission issued the *White paper on European Governance* in which:

The Irish 'no' highlights the impact of these problems on many people. This was reflected not only in the final outcome of the referendum, but also in the low turnout and quality of the debate which preceded it. Yet people also expect the Union to take the lead in seizing the opportunities of globalisation for economic and human development, and in responding to environmental challenges, unemployment, concerns over food safety, crime and regional conflicts. They expect the Union to act as visibly as national governments. (EUCOM 2001: 3)

This executive capacity for decision making became all too immediate with the European financial crisis, and Laffan, writing in 2010, refers to this time as a critical junction and warns of the possibility that Ireland had become either a 'whipping boy' or 'scapegoat' by European élites:

Ireland's dependence on the EU in the terms of the bailout could well have long lasting effects on Ireland's relationships with European institutions and the other Member States [...] [T]he discourse and narrative on the bailout in the Irish print media is replete with references to what was done to Ireland, to Ireland as victim. (Laffan 2010: 9)

The economic interrelationship shared between members of the Economic Monetary Union is made all too visible by the conditions of crisis (thought to have occurred between 2008 and 2013—see Houses of the Oireachtas 2016 for a thorough review of the Troika refinancing response) and is in evidence in recent capitulations of the meaning of European identity. In an experimental propaedeutic on the future prospects of European identity, Vaclav Havel wrote about the clear disassociation between the ambition to erect a European Monetary Union and one in which the Union is derived from the fellow-feeling and commonalities in and between Europeans:

The driving force behind European unification was economic, though at the same time it has become clear that achievement in this field alone is insufficient for the development of a European identity. Despite economic success, something is obviously missing at present. Trade and industry exist to serve the people, so the social objectives of the economy must be identifiable. (Havel 2004)¹⁷

However, where there was an economic solidarity from which Europeans reaped benefits, by dint of their living in Member States who benefitted directly therefrom, so too must there be efforts made to understand and to live among fellow Europeans.

Living among Europeans means, necessarily, being able to communicate with them. It is for this reason that European identity is bound up with language acquisition and an appreciation of other languages. Havel singles out, from among the features integral to a European identity, the necessity to acquire languages with a view to understanding our fellow citizens:

All Europeans should learn foreign languages as early as possible. European citizens must be able to understand each other. (ibid. 2004).

In the case of Ireland, this possibility for multilingualism was more difficult to realise given that the primary language of Ireland, as enshrined in its constitution, was not at that time (prior to 2008) recognised to be a modern European language at all. The distinction between recognised, modern languages and essential working languages is an important one; there are three ‘core’ working languages in the European institutions,

namely English, German and French, and 21 other recognised languages.¹⁸ Since 2008, it has been possible to apply for positions within the EU citing Irish as a second language, a necessity when applying for work within the EU institutions. This is a clear advantage for many while also alleviating problems concerning Ireland's generally monolingual composition.

A pertinent work in this domain is that of Dr. Sean Ó Ráin¹⁹ who writes about the necessity of Irish's inclusion among the European Union's recognised 'modern' languages; he remarks:

How does European identity relate to the Irish language? A common feature would appear to be equity or equal treatment, expressed in Irish as "cothrom na Féinne"²⁰, the fair play characteristic of the ancient Irish band of heroes, the Fianna. The Irish language lacked this equitable treatment for many centuries, and its absence today for most European languages may imperil both Europe's identity and its linguistic diversity. Although the present international language order pays lip service to the importance of human rights, and to the equality of individual rights irrespective of language, in practical terms it rejects them by perpetuating linguistic injustice. (Ó Ráin 2001)

This work predates the admission of the Irish language into the status of an official language of the European Union by 6 years, while also attempting to more closely join the dual notions language identity and political solidarity. At present, the Irish language is scheduled to become a fully recognised and implemented language of the EU by the year 2022. At present, the language is on derogation, which means that only a select few official EU documents are translated into Irish; after 2022, this will extend to every single communication released by the EU.²¹

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Ireland occupied, once again, a dual position of having overcome economic difficulty to be perceived as being among peers and was also hit hard by the European financial crisis; the acknowledgement of the Irish language, as being among the modern European working languages, which was voted in unanimously by the European Council of ministers is also an act of recognition, of solidarity.²² In order to establish what is meant by crisis, I wish to turn to Canguilhem's formulation that:

[Crisis] is a concept of medical origin- it is the concept of a change that, signalled by certain symptoms, intervenes in the course of an illness and that will indeed decide the life of the patient. (Canguilhem 2012: 69)

For this project's purposes, this question has been included within the general domain of the examination of how the Irish might be thought of as being European. Demoissier (2012) explains the reasons why it is that anthropology is well-suited, possibly even best placed, to examine the empirically embedded space, in writing:

Europe is as much a construction as it is a reality, which makes the anthropological discipline the perfect match for an understanding of social and cultural processes. The study of European integration is dominated by the growing role of political sciences, which as borrowed not always systematically some of anthropology's qualitative methodological tools. Time is ripe to engage with other disciplines and bring our cultural expertise back to the centre of the debate on the EU and on the relationship between culture and politics. (Demoissier 2012: 11)

It is for this reason that I wish to move, in this chapter's final sections, from the tumultuous relationship between Ireland and Europe to more ethnographically attuned accounts of the manner in which the Irish community have established a community in Brussels which might be thought of as being subject to the broader pattern of Europeanisation, as it has been capitulated here. This is scrutinised by way of culture and political orientation.

'BECOME IRISH' ON SAINT PATRICK'S DAY IN BRUSSELS

One of the most important events in the Irish social calendar is St. Patrick's Day, celebrated every year on March 17th and whose celebration officially brings Seachtain Na Gaeilge,²³ an event examined in the following section, to a close. St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is best known for having been able to explain the complexity of the Holy Trinity to Irish pagans in terms of a shamrock, whose three points constituted the manifestation of three separate entities while remaining only one object.²⁴ The event has become synonymous with excessive drinking, due to the lenience which is exercised

with respect to Lenten vows. Shamrocks are often worn on the lapels or are emblazoned upon badges, as the event begins early in the morning when Manneken Pis²⁵ is bedecked with an Aran sweater, a tweed cap, and green trousers. The Hibernicisation of Manneken Pis is arranged by the Irish Embassy to Belgium and is usually conducted before the St. Patrick's Day march, which takes place in Parc Cinquantenaire, adjacent to Brussels' EU district. The 'parade' is in actuality more of an extended walk, or 'mórshiúl' in Irish, and is organised by a smaller cluster of agencies, although there is one individual who runs, with some assistance, each of these agencies. First, there is the not-for-profit group which arranges the walk, known as the 'Brussels Saint Patrick's Day Parade' which also comprises the 'Meetup' group known as 'The Irish in Europe Association (International)'.²⁶ The group concerns itself primarily with raising capital sufficient to hold the St. Patrick's Day parade at which there is usually a grandmaster and one or two musicians. The slogan for the St. Patrick's Day parade has remained more or less the same since the beginning of my research stay, namely 'Everyone is invited to wear the green²⁷ and be Irish for the day!' The term Irish for the day is an interesting one and on the walk/parade I took a photo of a sash, which was being worn by a woman whose hibernophilia had drawn her to celebrate the event and which was a direct testament to that sentiment. Irishness here takes on a non-sedentary, nation-bound quality; it becomes an unmoored Irishness in flux and for this reason creates the possibility for non-Irish people to join the festivities on an equal footing (Fig 3.1).

The act of interpolation, then, is foregone and everyone simply becomes Irish by their being in attendance. What can be observed, then, is the parenthetical accessibility of Irishness being re-appropriated as an expansion of an existing concept-metaphor. What I would point out though is that the concept-metaphor's temporariness is an overarching concern here, indicated by the '...for the day' caveat. It is a day upon which anyone is welcome to join in, albeit in a partial way and in a time-restricted manner. The controlled and carefully planned out route is similar in many senses to the way through which Irishness, and attachments thereto, is parcelled out to the audience. Irishness is provisionally attributed, but claiming that this is the case any other day apart from the day on which it has been permitted would almost certainly result in a contestation.²⁸ It was my intention to analyse this phenomenon on



Fig. 3.1 'Irish for the day'. St. Patrick's Day in Brussels (Author's own)

a more regular basis than once a year in Brussels, and its hinterlands, and in what follows I attempt to offer a tracing of the manner in which Irishness, and belonging thereto in a sense, is meted out.

BECOME IRISH FOR AN HOUR OR TWO. SEACHTAIN NA GAELIGE

Seachtain na Gaeilge [transl. The week of Irish] seems to have been observed and celebrated in Belgium from around 2008 onwards. The event celebrates and highlights the Irish language and, albeit tangentially, other more stereotypically Irish fare such as music. It spans between 14 and 17 days, turning the title of the event into something of an inside joke. The event is officially opened with a speech in Irish by both the Irish Commissioner for Research and Innovation, during my research this was Máire Geogahan-Quinn, as well as others since its inception. The opening event is held in the Irish Permanent Representation to the European Union, on Rue De Froissart, Brussels, and while the first two times it appeared as though there was a spontaneity to the occasion, over time it was possible to discern various behavioural and linguistic motifs which was compounded by the fact that the affair is a primarily social one.

The early parts of the evening, prior to the official opening speech, are held in a large function room at which Guinness, red and white wine are freely available. The event is attended, for the most part, by employees in the European Commission who work as English-Irish translators as well as members of the non-Irish community who speak Irish. For the three incarnations at which I could be present, a similar sentiment was mentioned by those giving speeches, often in Irish alone; the first topic is the quasi-esoteric character of the Irish language, thought to be incredibly useful in the capacity of day to day life in Brussels. Speaking to this point, an informant once claimed: 'you can't, after all, have a private conversation in English in Brussels. You need something else' (Declan).

The ancient connection the Irish language has with the Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe (examined in the chapter that follows) was also restated time and again. Finally, an overview of the events which celebrate the week(s) of Irish include a 'Trath na gceist' [table quiz], 'Ceolchoirm' [music concert] and a 'Lón le gaeilge' [a lunch held entirely through Irish, even in interactions with wait staff and which takes place in Delish²⁹ and whose staff are fluent in Irish]. Publicity for these events takes place both via email and by way of a dedicated Facebook group.³⁰

Here, the centrality of the Irish language serves as something of a disincentive to a broader audience, and most of the events are organised in such a manner as to optimise the amount of shared conversation that can

take place. Where St. Patrick's day invites those living in Brussels and its hinterlands to be Irish for a day, Seachtain na Gaeilge relies quite heavily on a pre-supposed Irishness which is in tune with the language and to a very high competence; it is, in this way, exclusive to a certain extent. What they have in common, though, is that they are only partially shared and appear to be non-porous in composition given their calendrical scarcity.³¹ The two sections which follow might be thought of as being less exclusive, given that their intention is both to represent Irishness and to assist in the orientation and acclimatisation of the Irish to Brussels, respectively.

THE 'GREEN BOOK': POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN IRELAND AND BRUSSELS

This section traces a political engagement as performed by Irish people in Brussels; admittedly, I have opted to focus on non-national political leanings, and so Ireland's political party's offices in Brussels have been overlooked. This decision was made as an effort to attempt to discern a more postnational, European view of different engagements in awareness-raising efforts. To that end, this section examines the biannual release of a manual that is aimed at acclimatising members of the Irish community to Belgium.

During this project's formative phase, and in attempting to ground the work among an advocacy group who worked to 'Europeanise' its population, I came across a website that offered to help Irish expats to adjust to life in Brussels during their 'stages' in the European Institutions. I received a copy of the *Green Book Vol. 2* in late 2010. The staff at the European Movement also forwarded a list of pubs in Brussels at which the stagiaires tend to drink and explained how the Green Book was first planned by way of a desire to provide an in situ-derived work which they felt did not exist prior to that. There is an inductive, things as they are, component to the project which interested me and I would like to devote the section which follows a short examination thereof.

The Green Book (the subtitle of which is: *A very handy book if you happen to be an Irish Stagiaire*³² *in Brussels*) is teeming with insight and drew a great deal from testimony given by former stagiaires. It addresses a broader set of concerns affecting the Irish community in Brussels more generally. The book's introduction also sought to offer a riposte to the notion of an anonymous Eurocratic elite who, by moving to Brussels, become strangers to their fellow countrymen:

It's just so important to show to everyone in Ireland that people don't just get on a plane and disappear (which is often the view held) – instead, the Irish people living and working in the EU system are incredible ambassadors for our country representing Ireland through their work ethic and their commitment (our sense of humour does help too...). (Andrea Pappin, Executive Director, 2010: 3)

The book is pragmatic to the core and includes general tips on Brussels life, a guide to daily necessities unavailable (or extortionately priced) in Brussels, discusses banking, accommodation and commuting options. Some of the advice given borders on advocating illegality though,³³ specifically where registering in a commune is concerned, and arguments for and against it are put forward; in the pro column, there is the ever-looming threat of things going wrong and requiring juridical intervention which is impossible without having been registered and the cons highlight the costs involved (in terms of both time and money). Other sections of the book also attempt to underscore similarities between daily life in Ireland and daily life in Brussels, such as 'Bancontact' (or Maestro as it also known) being analogous to a debit card (on page 11), an outline of public holidays which overlap (on page 18), as well as providing contact details for the English-speaking Catholic church in Kraainem, for one of the largest GAA clubs³⁴ in Brussels and of an Irish butcher, Jack O' Shea's (which has since closed), on Rue le Titien (on pages 31–33). The aim of this work seems to be to help to close the gap between conceptual-metaphorical familiarity of Ireland and the unknown features of 'Europe'. This often necessitates the drawing of parallels between how particular things are done in Ireland and how they are done in Belgium.

The creation of analogies between Ireland and Belgium is also a practice which is in evidence and to which my informants often made mention. Emma, when discussing her daily commute, stumbled in remembering one of the road's names.

It's, eh... It's got the same name as the metro stop. It's on the tip of my tongue. It's Grafton Street. It's the Grafton Street of Brussels! (Emma)

Emma is referring to Dublin's central shopping pavilion, Grafton Street, and from there, it was possible to determine that she was actually speaking about the street that serves the same function in Brussels; she was either speaking about Rue de Louise, Louisalaan or Rue Neuve, Nieuwstraat. What is interesting to note, though, is the primacy of place

which Irish-derived places hold even after their having moved abroad. Moreover, both locations are associated with wealth; they are both prominently placed in their respective cities and have many shopping arcades.

The Green Book is now in its 11th incarnation, and since I began my fieldwork another branch of the European Movement, Ireland was established in Brussels in March 2013. Prior to that, and during my initial foray into fieldwork expeditions, it had been contingent on one or two members of the European Movement Ireland to fly over with a suitcase, usually still tagged with an Aer Lingus sticker, full of hard copies of the Green Book each time a new volume was issued. This would take place the same evening on which the event was scheduled to take place. The book launches were open to the public and well advertised on their website³⁵ and on Facebook.³⁶ These events were advertised as EM (European Movement) Brussels Connection events and whose express intention was to have Irish stagiaires come together and exchange contact information with the view to creating a network.

The events have also risen in profile, with the establishment of a dedicated Brussels-based branch of the European Movement, and this year's event was held in the Irish Permanent Representation to the European Union and not in Kitty O' Shea's pub as it had been, a significantly more prestigious venue than it had been held in previously. Political engagement and the commensurability of individual desires with socialising and access to a prominent network of young European professionals are certainly a significant factor in this. However, given the infrequency of these events, and the high concentration of those in attendance milling around and offering business cards, I decided to turn to find something more substantial. The section that follows details the European Movement International's training academy, my attendance at which has informed a great deal of this work's understanding of European identity and supra-national workings.

TRAINING EUROPEANS: EUROPEAN MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

In June 2011, I participated in a short training academy offered by the European Movement Training Academy. The week-long course aimed at providing an examination of the inner working of many of the European institutions, as well as providing the space to build up a network within

Brussels of like-minded, career-driven EU enthusiasts.³⁷ While I found the coursework interesting, and it has certainly informed the construction of the present work, it was the extra-curricular activities which were the most illuminating. This particular iteration of the training academy had three other Irish people taking part, many of whom had a broad knowledge of the workings of the European Union. One afternoon we were tasked with presenting our countries of origin to our classmates. It was a team exercise, and it was quickly decided upon that the meeting, at which we would discuss strategies, would be held in Fat Boys on Place de Luxembourg. 'Place Lux', as Place Luxembourg is colloquially known, comprises a series of bars and restaurants which encompass a small, central green area and which is located at the just next to the European Parliament building. The place has become synonymous with networking and is at its busiest on Wednesdays and Thursdays provided that the Parliamentarians, and parenthetically their aides, are not in session in Strasbourg.

The meeting began and immediately ideas were cast out as to how to subvert or lampoon some of the more curious aspects of the relationship Ireland has with the European Union. What surprised me, and which has taken a foothold in my thinking on representation, was that there was one in the party who had absolutely no interest in making light of Ireland's situation and so pleaded that we treat the topic reverentially. She made an appeal which hinged upon our common Irishness as bearing a responsibility to act as ambassadors for our culture and began scribbling down broad topics which came under the banner of culture, literature, sport, music and dancing—the final one required that we get up in front of our class of 17 or so and dance an Irish dance. What struck me was the felt-desire to give a representation of Ireland that was, in essence, a glorification of the island's achievements. Perhaps feeling that the group was less enthused about a project which would be harder to construct than a tongue-in-cheek overview, Aoife took charge and set about dividing up the tasks and reminded me that Ireland has an astonishingly high number of Nobel Prizes in literature and asked me to look up the exact amount on my phone. The profundity of her sincerity was palpable:

I think people say: "Oh Ireland isn't really involved in Europe" but really that's just not true. When I worked as a stagiaire for an MEP my phone rang off the hook some days with people from Ireland who wanted their

voices to be heard. I don't think the idea of Europe is unpopular with Irish people or anything. I think *saying* that Europe is popular in Ireland is what's unpopular. (Aoife)

It was our job, then, being that we were in Brussels, to represent Ireland in a manner so as to remedy their democratic deficit and to put forward a representation of 'home', to fulfill exactly the mandate mentioned in the foreword to the Green Book, examined previously, and in so doing this would ensure that Ireland was being represented on other people's behalves and in the best light possible.

The European training academy also offered days on which it was possible to visit the various sites located on the Brussels hinterland and provided a great deal of literature on various attractions. As it happened, the three women with whom I took the course were already familiar with Brussels which afforded me the opportunity to outline my project to them and to explore the processes of Europeanisation and Hibernicisation. One class, held before we broke for the day, concerned European citizenship and was given by Diogo Pinto. The lecture contended that we might observe identity, although I feel that multiple senses of belonging or identification are what were meant, as something dual (or even more) rather than as something singular and during the break which followed, when I asked about identity, an informant interjected that she had never considered it in that way before:

Like, that you can be a part of two things and them not contradict one another, like they can co-exist, is something I don't think I would have ever thought of. It's not something we're taught either; Ireland is one thing and Europe is a place over there. (Sinead)

While this is well-trodden ground in anthropological examinations of hybridity, syncretism and Mobius-style subjectivity, it was new to Sinead. The lens of Europe, as an outer identity, is similar to that constructed and transmitted in Joyce (1916), but moreover, it also contains the condition by which this multiple identification exists elsewhere too. In closing, then, the European movement attempts to bring into existence, by way of both their courses and their *Green Book*, a new orientation towards Europe which is meted out through the deployment of analogy and relation to their home country, but which evolves into a kind of augmenting of identity which can occur as in the manner written about above.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In his work, *Deconstructing Ireland: Identity, Theory, Culture*, Colin Graham posits that Ireland is, broadly, a phantasmal signifier which does not seek to fix itself in the desire and utopian-style longing for a united Ireland, the constant need to authenticate particular versions of an ancestral past and an acknowledgement of the momentum and direction in which Ireland's future is fast becoming its present. Graham writes:

'Ireland' stages its own deconstruction and that at every turn the idea unravels and reforms itself, always in anticipation of the next act of definition and criticism which, like this one, will be inadequately applied to it. (Graham 2001: x)

In attempting to pin down Ireland, both conceptually and with respect to those subjects which claim a meaningful belonging thereto, I must acknowledge that mine is an attempt to posit Europeanness as being the most recent participant in a kind of supplementary chain which extends back further into history than accounts of them often allow for.

What has been sought in this chapter is, first, the grounding and the emergence of the economic conditions through which Ireland could be thought of as being European, on through the difficulties which came about in advocating the further expansion of Europe as a political project (through referenda specifically). The conceptual slipperiness and the unfolding over time of how Irishness has been represented and what it means are certainly subject, as Graham describes, to vicissitudes, changes and partial acknowledgement.

What became necessary, then and after having understood the various dimensions of European belonging, was a closer examination of the composition of the social field and the manner in which Irishness, and the process of hibernicisation, is transforming the surroundings of Brussels in more and less temporary ways. The notion of Irishness comes to be embedded in multiple ways and to varying degrees of accessibility; what remains present, though, is a broad receptivity to the possible (re)conciliation of European and Irish identities, with the acknowledgement of the Irish language's entry into the fold as a modern European language, and an acknowledgement from above and below about the necessity of revisiting the European social model. This would, ideally, allow for issues concerning European integration and Ireland to become less unpopular.

The occasions outlined here serve multiple purposes, of easing one's transition to daily life in Brussels, of showing outwardly that the Irish language still has a relevance in the twenty-first century and of supplementing the expatriate's desire for cultural fare by way of more augmented displays of Irishness. It might be relevant here, then, to revisit the vignette which introduced the direction of this chapter and which served to show a desire both to supplement one's Irishness for more 'European' fare, as well as by being nostalgic and by reimagining what is available. This desire was also clearly observable through Aoife's request that Ireland be represented in its best possible light as well, as the earnest desire that people might become more candid about the degree to which 'Europe' shapes the political landscape in Ireland.

There is also a marked difference between the kind of Europe-wide sense of solidarity, thought to be in effect in the context of Brussels, and the fragmented and partial manner in which non-Irish people are acknowledged. Given the history of Irish people, with their worldwide community, one might think that an organisation which capitalises on a receptivity that lasts for more than one day might be something sustainable.

In examining how the Irish came to be thought of as European, and the exact manner in which that Irishness is navigated in a context thought to broadly represent 'Europe' over the course of the past 45 years, the chapter which follows is a more sustained examination of the historical antecedents that provide the groundwork for a possible, pre-existing Europe-wide sense of belonging, which was formulated in Leuven, Belgium in the seventeenth century.

NOTES

1. Central Statistics Office (CSO) Ireland and the EU 1973–2003 Economic and Social Change. <https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2004/ireland&theeu.pdf>.
2. The Ciorcal Comhrá (transl. Conversation Circle) takes place in Brussels on the last Thursday of every month between 2012 and 2015. It has since been revived (in 2017) and is now held bi-monthly on Wednesdays.
3. The invitation, sent monthly, is controlled by the chief organiser and includes a lengthy list of email addresses which largely consist of ec.europa.eu, consilium.europa.eu and europarl.europa.eu domain names, indicating attendees' ties to the European institutions.

4. For the purposes of anonymity, I have not opted to name the school of which there are 5 and which are scattered around Brussels and its hinterlands.
5. The objectives, according to a document entitled: 'The European Schools' is to give pupils confidence in their own cultural identity—the bedrock for their development as European citizens (EUCOM 2012: 9). The term citizens here is not the kind examined previously and seems to stem more from Havel's definition (2004) than Aradau et al.'s (2010).
6. The annual fees for students who attend, but whose parents do not work in any of the European Institutions are €3804.69 for the nursery, €5231.51 for primary school and €7133.87 for secondary school. <https://www.eurcsc.eu/en/European-Schools/enrolments/school-fees>. Accessed on 16 November 2018.
7. I have endeavoured here to find a version of this speech re-printed in full in an academic work, but have only managed to locate it here: <http://archive.today/hSYZV>. Accessed on 18 December 2018.
8. This tension between Europe and North America is examined below by employing a specific speech thought to give voice to Ireland's more American-leaning inclination.
9. For vox-pops of what people thought of the accession of Ireland to the European Economic Community, a video of a series of brief interviews, broadcast in 1972, can be viewed at: http://www.euscreen.eu/play.jsp?id=EUS_93D2AF57AE4E4FA4B06ACD79760F508D.
10. This uneven economic relationship manifested itself as a 'civilizational' divide and was common to the Irish diaspora in England and which are examined in Chapter 5.
11. I must here acknowledge the work of a colleague, Julia Rozanska, who works on Polish employees of a wide variety of European Institutions and which attempts to examine their processes of engrenage since their accession in 2004.
12. The press release tribute, issued by the European people's party on the 19th of May 2011 on the occasion of his passing, heralded Fitzgerald as 'one of Ireland's great Europeans'. <http://pr.euractiv.com/pr/tribute-dr-garret-fitzgerald-one-irelands-most-committed-europeans-epp-group-chairman-joseph-daul>.
13. A comparative analysis of the manner and extent to which European commissioners, of every single Member State, adhere to this code would also, doubtless, make interesting anthropological grist for the mill; this, however, fall beyond the scope of inquiry of the present work.
14. Although this speech is cited often, by Laffan as well as more popular media, it seems next to impossible to procure a copy of the speech in its entirety.

15. For an excellent overview of the varieties of Euroscepticism, see Brack and Costa (2012).
16. For an expanded examination of the effects that the Nice treaty brought about, see *The treaty of nice: A comprehensive guide* (2008) available here: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/nice_treaty/index_en.htm.
17. I have not been able to secure a hard copy of this speech. It is available in full, with a brief synopsis of how it came to be ratified: <http://www.eurit.it/Eurplace/diba/citta/cartaci.html>.
18. See http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/official_languages_en.htm.
19. Dr. Sean O Ríain, as well as being a well-respected figure in the Irish community and occasional attendee to the Ciorcal Comhrá, is invited to give a lecture on the occasion of ‘Seachtain na Gaeilge’, and he has lectured on this theme every year for the past four years during which research was conducted.
20. Cothrom na féinne means something akin to a fair and equal treatment among peers as well as an equality, or parity of esteem, among a people of the same type.
21. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/languages-culture/news/irish-to-be-given-full-official-eu-language-status/>. Accessed on 16 October 2018.
22. For more on the entry of the Irish language as the 21st working language of the European Union, see <http://eu2013.ie/ireland-and-the-presidency/about-ireland/irishlife/irishlanguage>.
23. Transl.: ‘The week of Irish’.
24. For a comprehensive history of St. Patrick’s Day festivities, which are documented in largely Anglophone communities, see Cronin and Adair (2002).
25. Mannekin Pis is a small, bronze statue of you young boy urinating into a font and is a popular favourite among Brussels-bound tourists. For more, see <http://www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4328>.
26. <http://www.meetup.com/Irish-in-Europe>.
27. ‘Wherever the green is worn’ is a turn of phrase coined in Yeats’ ‘Easter, 1916’ which details the events of the Civil Rising in Dublin at that time but has also been used in Coogan’s 2002 work ‘Wherever the Green is worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora’. The wearing of the green is symbolically imbued with having a connection to the expansive Diaspora as well as to the homeland.
28. This is analysed at length in Chapter 5 which aims to examine even how Irish belonging can come to be questioned as being valid in the space of one generation, such as was the case for the Irish in the UK in the 1960s.
29. <http://www.delish.be/>. Accessed on 16 December 2018.

30. Seachtain na Gaeilge: Océidí sa Bheilg (Weeks of Irish, Events in Belgium): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/102015379878220/>.
31. A possible reason for this being is that the former is only celebrated once a year and the latter because meeting Irish speakers in Belgium is a rarity for all of the reasons highlighted in this chapter.
32. Stagiaire is another name given to one who undertakes a traineeship or an intern position, usually within one of the European institutions.
33. The requirement of foreign persons to register in their local commune, as their first step, is outlined here: <https://www.brussels.be/registration-newly-arrived-foreigner>. Accessed on 12 December 2018.
34. The GAA, or the Gaelic Athletics Associations, are in charge of a large family of Irish sports, the chief among which and the one to which I allude here is the Gaelic version of football. The primary differences between football as it is played in Ireland in comparison with football as it is played in England are the use of player's hands, the ability to bounce the ball and that 'goals' are worth three points you can also score by kicking or throwing the ball over the crossbar of the goal for one point.
35. <http://www.europeanmovement.ie/event/em-ireland-brussels-connection/>.
36. <https://www.facebook.com/EMIrelandBrussels>.
37. Similar courses are available at blbe.be which acts as something of a more international brand of Brussels-based analysis and which has its own equivalent of the *Green Book* referred to as the *Survival Guide for Newcomers in Brussels*: <http://www.blbe.be/en/survival-guide-newcomers-brussels>. I am indebted here to Noel Salazar for pointing this out.

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CHAPTER 4

Placing the Irish Diaspora in Place and Time in Europe

This chapter examines the role played by the Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe (LIIE) (otherwise known as the ‘Irish College’) in the ‘Europeanisation’ of the Irish community in Belgium. This is performed by way of a historical analogy being drawn between the exiles who arrived to the present-day site of the Irish college in Leuven in the past and the arrival of present-day expatriates (usually temporarily as students of the local university, staff members of the Irish college and others). The Irish college (founded in 1608) attempts to ground a clear-cut trajectory between past and present. The conjoining of these two people groups (exiles in the past and those living in Leuven in the twenty-first century) has been so seamless at times that Ireland’s belonging to Europe throughout history is taken as a foregone conclusion; this contention is analysed throughout this chapter.

My aim is to interrogate that claim, and others that surround Ireland’s historical belonging to ‘Europe’ in terms of the Irish language, the veracity of some historical claims made about the Irish college, who exactly owns the premises and others. The historical groundedness of claims of Irishness is examined in the introductory vignette which provides details of a terrible tragedy that occurred in Leuven in 2014. On this date, a fire broke out not far from the Irish college that claimed the lives of two young women, Dace Zarina and Sara Gibaldo.

31 JANUARY 2014

In the early hours of the morning of 31 January 2014 a deadly fire consumed a residence in Leuven, Flanders, approximately 30 kilometres from Brussels. The house in question was commonly referred to as 'Irish house' and could be found at the corner of Bankstraat and Kapucijnenvoer. The residence was a seven-bedroom, run-down premises that was just a short walk from the Irish college. It was used to house students from Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology who serve as trainees in the LIIE. The trainees who reside there commonly work in the field of hospitality and living in Belgium is quite an appealing prospect for around 6 months (30 weeks), as I was told.

On the day in question, I woke to a message sent to myself and 25 other Irish people residing in Belgium at that time via Facebook; the message gave some preliminary details about the fire that had taken place in the morning and implored us to get in touch with our respective parents, who would be concerned if they heard the news first. Before long, we came to understand that there had been a fire in Irish house, and that only eight of the ten residents had been accounted for. There were differing reports about culpability, questions concerning whether the building was registered as a student house (the importance of this matter having to do with a special organisation tied to the University which inspects properties annually to ensure that smoke detectors are installed and working). Residents of 'Irish house' were temporarily housed in a local Irish pub, were contacted and subsequently visited by staff at the Irish Embassy visited and were put on the next plane back to Ireland to be with their families. Before too long, details emerged of the two young women who died of smoke inhalation while hiding in a wardrobe in the upper part of the building.

One remarkable feature of the coverage of the event was the frequency with which the recently deceased's lineage or ethnicity was mentioned. While early reports in English were later revised, there were claims early in the day that the deceased were two women who were Polish and Latvian, only to later remark that they were of Polish and Latvian parentage (or some variation thereof); this seemed an unusual point to mention, given that they were born in Longford and Oranmore, respectively. RTE News omitted their provenance in an article entitled: 'College says building "in compliance" after two Irish women die in fire'.¹

The insistence on the non-Irish subject positions occupied by these two young women is palpable in some of the unredacted coverage detailing their horrific and untimely deaths, specifically in the Flemish media from around that time. For instance, in an article entitled: ‘Two students die in apartment fire in Leuven’, the fact that the two women had Irish nationality, but were from other European countries, is the second line of the piece.² An article from *The Bulletin*, entitled: ‘Two students die in apartment fire in Leuven’ makes a similar point, although they mentioned their Polish and Latvian roots before mentioning their Irish nationalities.³ *VRT news* also mentions that the two young women had Irish identity, but that they were born in Poland and Latvia.⁴ Later on though, one of the section headings from the same article begins with the curious assertion that: ‘Slachtoffers zijn Pools en Lets meisjes’ (Translation: Victims are Polish and Latvian girls). KU Leuven’s official outlet refers to them only as: Ierse studentes (Irish students)⁵; going one step further, *HLN* does not mention the nationalities of the young women in either piece published on the topic.⁶ Somewhat oddly, *Het Nieuwsblad* distances themselves one degree further from the young women’s national identities by referring to them as ‘Passport holders’.⁷

I visited the ‘Irish house’ some months after the fire, and there are only informal commemorative items there now. The building is now condemned and the placard reads ‘Onbewoonbaar Verklaard sinds 13-2-2014’ (Translation: Declared uninhabitable since 13-2-2014). While interviews with participants in Leuven predated this event, by and large, the event has been formative in my thinking and writing, specifically concerning the question of why it is that Sara and Dace were not thought of as having become Irish. Why was it that they were so frequently construed as only provisionally Irish, as ‘passport holders’ or ‘foreign-born Irish’? Why would the distinction matter after such a tragic event? (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2).

This chapter, therefore, aims to investigate the history of the college in order to recast presently prevailing discourses that concern the capitulation of Irish and European identity. The history traces the difficulty, first, in establishing roots in Leuven and, thereafter, of establishing an identity or place of belonging for a subset of people of Irish provenance who arrived in the then-Spanish Netherlands. The second section attends to provide in situ, contextual examples of the manner in which this identity is challenged, meted out and critiqued from both within and without. Finally, the question of how the LIIE or ‘Irish college’ addresses



Fig. 4.1 Onbewoonbaar verklaard sinds 13-2-2014 (Photo Author's own)



Fig. 4.2 Memorial at 'Irish House' Bankstraat (Photo Author's own)

and meets the needs of the Irish community in Leuven and Brussels is also examined. This chapter also explores the seminal importance that Leuven has to Irish identity, through the LIIE by examining what comprises claims to authentic belonging or nationality that are predicated on history and continuity. I closely examine the role played by the LIIE in this process as well as trace the different lines of becoming that are undertaken by the Irish and the non-Irish alike in Leuven. Given the anthropologically sensitive focus of this work, it has been deemed necessary to select a site such as the LIIE which is thought to represent the manner in which this historical connection has slackened, become stronger and become something else over time.

Then, while it has been necessary for this work's purposes to divide the context of Leuven from that of Brussels, in point of fact they are far more integrated in practice than has been suggested up to this point. Leuven was the arrival site of a small band of Franciscans in exile and is thought to be the hub around which the Irish community orbit; this site of the arrival was renamed the 'Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe' in 1983. This followed closely behind the site's de-consecration, and the venue is attributed with a variety of landmark historical endeavours ranging from the penning of the first authoritative history of the Irish people (in the 'Annals of the four masters'⁸) to the preservation and reinvention of the Irish language. It serves as an excellent point of departure from which questions concerning the historical dimension and dynamics of Irish identity, language, and political engagement can be examined as a repository of the elements which are thought to act as ethnic markers. This is similar to what occurred in the previous chapter, only the other way around.

In the previous chapter, I attempted to restate the difficulty in consigning what, at present, we might think of as geographical distance to a notion which becomes something of a triviality in an age in which the affordability of transnational air travel has become cheap and accessible, to varying degrees, to all. How this has often manifested itself, in studies of the Irish abroad, is as an overarching concern with the composition of the Irish diaspora solely in locations which are more remote and which are, generally, Anglophone. Given this work's central research interest, which concerns the extent and manner in which we might think of the Irish community as being, in a sense, European, it is first necessary to position this historical oversight as something of a stumbling block. It is only through an examination of how the Irish become more closely

associated with their continental counterparts that a question such as the one formulated here can be addressed.

What become real objects of critical inquiry, then, are the exact manner in which the Irish community abroad were received in a multilingual capacity and what effect this encounter is thought to have both on their constructions of identity and their perceptions of the role and relevance of their own language.⁹ It is exactly to this multilingual continent that a band of 100 or so migrants arrived from the oppressive conditions that existed in Ireland at that time and it is to this context that the section which follows attends. One observation we might bear in mind, prior to a fuller examination below, is the degree of flexibility that had been commented upon with respect to how members of the Irish community abroad deployed and mobilised their own Irishness. We observe this in Lyons and O'Connor's *Strangers to Citizen's: The Irish in Europe, 1600–1800* in which different levels of political engagement allowed for the possibility of specific political belongings in Europe; this could perhaps be viewed as a political toleration of the Irish by the host country:

The deployment of inbound Irish migrants in the political strategies of receiving jurisdictions was important. The phenomenon, in all its variety, illustrates how it sometimes suited host administrations to maintain an 'Irish' community, or at least an 'Irish identity', in order to serve specific local political objectives. (Lyons and O'Connor 2008: 6)

The section that follows examines the reasons behind the foundation of the Irish college and the principles upon which it was based. Examining different accounts of the Irish college's history will serve to undo the monopoly that the Irish college possesses about its own history and will allow for certain questions about the college's history to be raised.

LOCATING THE IRISH COLLEGE OF LEUVEN IN TIME

With any examination of a historical kind, it is first necessary to parse out the exact context in which the foundation of the college occurred.

After the Irish defeat at Kinsale in 1601 and the flight of the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell in 1607 (the year St Anthony's was founded)

Louvain became a source of new life for the Irish province. Mooney said that King Philip III of Spain (d.1621), conceded the foundation to the friars as an alms at a time when the rulers of England had forbidden them to have a house of studies or a novitiate for the reception of candidates in Ireland [...] Writing in 1630, another Franciscan minister provincial interested in recording the history of the province, Francis O' Mahony, said that by then the College had produced sixty-eight missionaries and preachers, four ministers provincial, three archbishops, two bishops, eighteen lecturers in theology and twenty-five in philosophy - ten of the former and eleven of the latter going to help other Franciscan provinces on the continent; he added that the Louvain friars set up a printing press (another new venture) and printed books in Irish for the use of the faithful at home. (Fennessy 2000: 217–218)

It is very easy to observe the difficulty in postulating a 'national identity', as opposed to something more akin to the deployment of a descriptive label or imagined similarity, at a time when no such object, as such, existed. Many of the Franciscans who worked in Leuven studied the philosophy of Duns Scotus believing him to be Irish, whereas the designation *Scoti* refers both to the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland. Scotism was nevertheless championed by Franciscans all over Europe.

What can be observed is the Franciscan's desire to assist those left behind at home, by way of providing liturgical material that was accessible to them, a single discursive representation for those who found themselves in exile after the 'Flight of the Earls' as well as the desire to simplify the construction of the language in order to maximise exposure among some of the less-literate Irish folk. This was chiefly an undertaking carried out by Franciscan, and former Arch-Bishop of Tuam, Florence Conry (Irish: Flathraí o Maoil Chonaire):

In translating this work, Conry addressed an audience which included the clergy but also literate Gaelic laity. He appeals to Gaelic literati not to criticise the simplicity of it, but rather to understand his pious objective of helping the poorly educated. (O'Connor 2002: 100–101)

He explains that the translation was intended for those who have no knowledge of languages other than simple Irish.¹⁰ This contradicts a variety of other understandings which claim that, in fact, the work was translated from Spanish, and not Catalan, and that it was translated into a far more complicated version of Irish than it had been originally to

please the Irish literati.¹¹ This is still a matter of contention and Conry's citation in the *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia* reads:

One of the earliest works of Conry was a translation from Spanish into very pure Irish of a catechism known as "The Mirror of Christian Life", printed at Louvain in 1626, but probably current in manuscript at an earlier date, both in Ireland and among the Irish troops in the Netherlands; this was composed, as he says himself, "out of charity for the souls of the Gael". (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*¹²)

Whatever the intention behind writing the text may have been, what we can discern from the original foundation of the Irish college of Leuven was the dual intentions of those residing within the college to spread of the word of God and of the possibility of printing works in Irish from abroad for the betterment of Irish people at 'home'. Addressing the Irish, summoning an extant population into existence from exile, seems to have taken place along the lines of an etymological reconstruction through the reinvention of the Irish language as well as through ethnic, identity-based markers. Mac Craith (2007) traces the shift in linguistic register in the following manner:

[O]ne of the novel features of Louvain publications is their preference for the geographical marker *Eireannach* in place of the ethnic markers *Gaoidheal* and *Sean-Ghaill*. This seems to have been a deliberate option adopted by the Franciscans in order to surmount the ethnic tensions dividing the exiled Irish communities and help them present a united front before the papacy and the Catholic powers of Europe. (Mac Craith 2007: 30)

This point requires a certain amount of elaboration and rests on a difference in Irish which is undiscernible in English. The replacement of the words 'Eireannach' and 'Sean-Ghaill' or 'Gael' is more than simply a shift in the linguistic register. It is a shift that approximates the germ of differentiation between Irish people, in name only, and people who are ethnically Irish. The invocation of the language itself is among the components of the claim to legitimacy. The word *Eireannach* means something akin to a person born in Ireland, where *Gael* means Irish in a stricter sense.¹³ Even the employment of the term *Gael* is now used to signify those who speak Irish as opposed to the term *Eireannach* which implies that they may not. The deferral, beyond ethnic confines,

in evidence even as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, continues today in the capacity of the Irish-Belgian contingent of the European diaspora. This endeavour is one that seems bent on ensuring that the Irish diaspora continues attempting to bring a European-focussed, and oriented, disposition into existence. This remains the central mission of the LIIE:

Our mission is to maximise the opportunities presented by membership of the EU through the organisation of tailor-made residential programmes at our campus in Leuven, drawing on the expertise and network available to us from this unique location.¹⁴

In attempting to establish a continuity between the site's first inhabitants and its present-day owners, we observe the creation of a time-tested optic from which the de-ethnicised superseding, or supplementation of national ties, is thought to bring people into new relations with the peoples of continental Europe.

It has not been deemed a necessity to trace the historical rise and fall of the Franciscan effort in St. Anthony's College, Leuven, but instead to examine the historical origin to which it gave rise, even 400 years later, and to the possibility of a shift in ethnic markers, with respect to a greater power, the papacy at that time and the institutions of the European Union in the present. Examining the grounds of the Irish college in Leuven, a broad variety of multimedia and interactive panels supplement and re-present the lives as they were lived by those who resided, prayed and studied on the grounds. The displays claim possession of the foundational stone lain by King Phillip III¹⁵ and claim that Florence Conry's remains are kept beneath a slab on the grounds. The presence or absence of Conry's body is actually a matter of frequent speculation, and I have had to defer to the Reverend Brendan Jennings' writings on the matter:

To mark the place where the remains now finally rested, in the wall on the Gospel side, and only a few feet from the altar, a simple monument was set up, a slab of polished black marble, with a Latin inscription. It is still in situ, and when the college came back into the hands of the Irish Franciscans in 1924, after it had been more than a hundred years out of their possession, and when much work of restoration had to be done both in house and chapel, the present writer, to whom this responsibility had been entrusted, made every effort to ascertain whether any trace of a burial urn, or of any bones, might be found but with no success. It is possible

that the remains lie behind the slab, which is solid and heavy, and could only be removed with the greatest difficulty. (Jennings 1949: 91)

Unknown, too, is the status of the documents and archival material which was once held in trust there, although the majority is believed to be held in the Michael Ó Cléirigh Institute in University College Dublin and the rest is held by the Franciscan Order in Dublin, Ireland.

The position that Ireland adopts within 'Europe', the foundation for its very belonging, is often cited as being in Leuven for the reasons outlined above; the building served as a safe haven for migrants in exile in 1608 (following 'The Flight of the Earls') and is now a transnational hub as well as a state of the art conference facility. It receives money from both the European Union and the Irish government. The geographical and geo-political entity 'Europe' becomes conflated, in a sense, temporarily and some commentators have gone as far as to say:

As Irish people, particularly when travelling to any corner of the globe, we become more and more aware of the clear brand of Irish people and Ireland. Ironically, it was in the Irish College of Louvain¹⁶, just outside Brussels, where this cultural identity both at home and in exile was first instigated and formed. (O'Connor 2009: 21)

Whether or not the cultural template of identity was created there is less interesting, to the aims of this work, than what might be achieved by examining the Irish college's history. What can be observed is a rupture between the Franciscan's intentions and the college's current role. The section that follows attempts to transmit the manner in which migration, seen as a similar situation to exile, brings in tow a parenthetical desire to reconnect with an imagined community along the dual lines of heritage and belonging.

EXILE, THE PAST AND RECONNECTION: HERITAGE AND LINES OF BELONGING

An examination of heritage can also give us a different perspective from which projects that put authenticity front and centre can become supplemented by works that elect to reframe the pliable and flexible relationship that heritage has with both place and with the informal postmodern economy. Kockel (2007) speaks directly to this point when writing that:

If we acknowledge that ‘authenticity’ is less a matter of true or false consciousness than a matter of the historical legitimacy of any associated identity claim, we can revisit the ‘invention of tradition’ debate and recognise ‘heritage’ as a fixation of ‘tradition’, conceived as process. This enables us to grasp that it is not so much tradition that has been invented but rather heritage. Tradition as a process involving cultural actors always includes the possibility of modifying what is being handed down between generations in order to adapt it to a changed historical context. (Kockel 2007: 97)

While Kockel’s view may be unnecessarily charitable to the notion of the invention of tradition, we can begin to observe a clear cleavage between the ideas of continuity, either a strand of continuity abroad which is preserved or brought into existence, and that of the centrality of continuity to a community’s sense of self back in one’s home place. Heritage is invoked here as it is explicitly mentioned in the discourse that the LIIE represents about itself and to others.

This is a necessity given the feeling of way-lessness encountered by migrants of any kind, according to Wagstaff who contends that:

[E]very migrant is also an exile, whether by choice or by necessity. But the need to reconnect in some way with the past, to re-establish a sense of origin and continuity, survives. The memory of a lost home persists and is part- a large part- of what it means to be human. (Wagstaff 2007: 164)

What Wagstaff may be oversimplifying, or dramatically overstating, is the nature of the intention behind acts of migration, their duration and the degree to which the re-establishment of continuity is desired. The re-establishment of origin, and the legacy of continuity, is not solely the domain of migrants though; it is also a necessity of nationalism. While traditions are narrativised, usually singular, invented phenomenon, the maintenance of a feeling of continuity has tended to take the official dictum of the nation state as its primary port of call. Mclean writes:

The archival rehabilitation of an ostensibly lost world reveals the state’s cultural self-legitimation to be analogous to a feat of necromancy, seeking to transmute the vestiges of a foregone past into a redemptive vision of national persistence and renewal... It is not enough for the nation-state simply to assert the antiquity of its ancestral pedigree; for its claims to be culturally persuasive, it is necessary that these imputed primordial beginnings be reiteratively summoned and deployed in the present. (Mclean 2004: 29)

This is the express function of the LIIE at present; the 'ancestral pedigree' itself rests on a curious juxtaposition of presence and absence, of continuity and discontinuity; by that I mean the building's renovation, the uncertainty as to whether or not Florence Conry's remains are housed there, the lack of an ongoing tradition of printing literature on site and the conspicuous lack of the Irish language on the walls of the building. This concern over ancestrality is not localised solely to historical continuity, but is instead lived out in a broad variety of daily life as it is encountered in contexts in which the interplay of reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation, and the role they play in the reshaping of the social field, seem to be at odds with one another for primacy.

Keohane and Kuhling (2004) claim that instead of tracing lines of becoming, here we might observe the centrality of elements that are in concert with one another and other elements which collide with one another:

In the contemporary era of globalisation, such cultural clashes or collisions between old and new, global and local, the principles of traditional community and modern society, continue to characterise Irish culture and identity, and indeed have become amplified. (Keohane and Kuhling 2004: 4)

Rather than the collision of past and present, in how the Irish college is perceived, the issue becomes compounded as we move our examination into the early twenty-first century.

With this in mind, it is possible to move to an examination of the interplay of these diffuse notions, how they coalesce and collect at the site of the modern day Irish college, the LIIE. This is the topic to which the following section is dedicated.

‘THE IRISH ARE NOW SO USED TO EXILE THAT IT IS PART OF THEIR HERITAGE’

Just beyond the entrance of the Irish college of Leuven, down the hall to the left and then to the right of the cloister entrance, there is a panel on the right-hand side which reads:

In the 9th century, the abbot of Reichenau in Switzerland wrote: The Irish are now so used to exile that it is part of their heritage.¹⁷

During a visit on the 10 February 2013, former Taoiseach (which has been translated as Prime Minister) Enda Kenny provided his own spin on the afore-cited quote, probably after having speedily read it during his tour of the premises and pronounced that: ‘Irish people are now so used to exile that it is part of our genes’; delivered in the declarative, and not attributed to the Abbot of Reichenau, it allowed for the speech which followed to flow seamlessly between an ancient precursor to the operations of the monks and those activities which are currently undertaken at the Irish college:

They also play a vital part continuing the tradition of the early Irish college in promoting Irish culture, an essential part of the noble legacy its founders have left to us.¹⁸

The furthering and promoting of Irish culture is not undertaken in a manner in keeping with the Franciscans desire to proselytise, however, nor is it undertaken as a vocation. The LIIE is the single most expensive venture funded by the Irish taxpayer that exists overseas. This information made the headlines of newspapers in the week after the college was officially (re-)opened by Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny and in the aftermath of the fire detailed at the outset of this chapter, but failed to receive much traction in any Irish News Media; the sole article I have managed to find ran with the headline ‘State gives €12m for Irish College facelift’.¹⁹

The Oireachtas²⁰ report, which was made available to the public, concerns an assessment of the expenditure of the Office of Public Works for the year ending 2009. In reviewing a number of line-item expenditures, one of the deputies present questioned the status of the Irish college in Leuven, as it is referred to, asking specifically whether it is held in ‘Irish trust’ or not. The inquisition ran along the following lines and bespeaks a general confusion, in Ireland at least, as to the exact role played by the Irish college as well as the exact nature of its ownership and its *raison d’être*. The section that pertains to the work of the LIIE has been reproduced in full and occurred between a deputy minister and the Chairperson of the Office of Public Works in 2010:

Deputy Edward O’Keeffe: What is going ahead in Leuven at the present time?

Ms Claire McGrath: The institute there runs educational programmes that are funded on a North-South basis. The construction is complete. The job is finished. The Irish college there offers residential and training courses and other seminars in a European context.

Deputy Edward O'Keeffe: Does the OPW have overall responsibility for the management of it?

Ms Claire McGrath: No.

Deputy Edward O'Keeffe: How is it managed?

Ms Claire McGrath: The institute is an independent body. I will revert to the committee with the details. It is a trust.

Deputy Edward O'Keeffe: Is it an Irish trust?

Ms Claire McGrath: Is the Deputy asking if it is registered in Ireland?

Deputy Edward O'Keeffe: Yes.

Ms Claire McGrath: I am not certain.

Deputy Edward O'Keeffe: I would like to know.

Ms Claire McGrath: I will revert to the committee in that regard.
(Oireachtas Committee of Public Accounts Debate 2010)²¹

In response, and by way of answering the many questions asked of the director which was sent at the end of December 2010 and made available to the public in March 2013. The letter deals with seven items, viewed to have been unsatisfactorily addressed in the Oireachtas meeting; item 5 concerns the Irish college in Leuven²²:

The Institute's mission is to help Ireland, both North and South, to meet the challenges and maximize the opportunities resulting from EU membership. It also actively promotes Irish Culture in mainland Europe [...] Works to refurbish and extend the College have been ongoing since 2004 with the assistance of grants from the Irish Government and the Northern Irish authorities. The total cost of the project, including fees etc. was €15.854 million to which the Irish government contributed €11.650m.
(Oireachtas Committee of Public Accounts Debate 2010)

The report also alludes to an agreement made with the Irish government in 1984 for the provision of €25,400 annually which is complemented by the earnings yielded from cultural events, programmes tailor made for (mostly) North American students who stay for periods ranging from between 1 and 2 weeks and from accommodation stays. The remainder of the report outlines the function played by the college on a more day-to-day basis concerning its conference and dining facilities, auditorium, attractive grounds and 60 bedrooms.

What is unclear from the back and forth, above, is whether the building can be thought of as being a site that is available to the public, depending on whether the Irish government has financed it or not. In practice, the entrance to the LIIE is not presently open to the public and I was often told in interviews and in less formal capacities that it is thought of as being a private enterprise, rather than something like a museum. What further confirms this lack of receptivity to the public, on an operational and everyday basis, is the absence of guided tours, the closure to the public of the bar and restaurant areas (outside of privately catered for events) and the presence of a heavily secured door next to which there is an intercom which controls entry. This was the primary difficulty encountered in pursuing research in the capacity of the LIIE; I had no right to be there day after day (Fig. 4.3).



Fig. 4.3 The Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe (Image in public domain)

What was required, then, was the implementation of a strategy which would allow me to come into contact with the stakeholders at the LIIE and which would facilitate, aid and abet an understanding of the manner through which their mission of Europeanising their surroundings, as well as maximising the benefits eked out from European Union membership for Ireland, was being attained.

'CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC': PUTTING MY 'SELF' TO GOOD USE

This lack of receptivity to the Irish public notwithstanding, Leuven is an integral part of Irish culture for members of the diasporic community in Belgium, for the historical reasons mentioned. To that end, other tactics, which optimised the amount of time that could be spent on the premises, had to be devised and implemented. This was done by reaching out to the Leuven Centre for Irish Studies (LCIS),²³ and I was soon able to establish a rapport with one of the directors, based on my nationality and interest in the Irish language. The LCIS maintains an office on the premises of the Irish college grounds. I offered to teach Irish courses, free of charge, to any student Flemish or otherwise, in the hopes that that would provide ingress into the Irish college's premises. I was also inducted as a junior member of the LCIS shortly thereafter.

One difficulty in undertaking anthropology at a site such as the LIIE is that the building is not open to the public and it is expected that if you are in the building then you have a purpose there, as expressed previously. This often lead to embarrassing incidents; on one occasion, I had been arranging Irish classes with the then-receptionist (classes which had no bearing upon the day-to-day workings of the Institute admittedly), and it was not too long before I was spotted by a senior member of staff who insinuated that my business had more to do with flirtation than it had to do with 'anything real'. I understood well the intention of what was expressed and left. On another occasion, however, I had been invited to celebrate the retirement of a member of staff from the department of Anthropology and was given a similar treatment. At the mid-point of the evening, I decided to go speak to the receptionist briefly, and to generally check in with other staff members, when the same employee as in the previous example took the glass of red wine I had been drinking out of my hand and begin to gesture at me to leave while exhaling. I had to explain that in fact I was well within my rights to be on the premises for a retirement event, at which time her face became

bright red and I was immediately handed back my wine. I noticed that in her other function, as a sommelier for the evening, she excelled from that point onwards—either to show penitence for mistaking me for an outsider or to ensure that I was, indeed, among those invited.

I was invited to meet with one of the Directors of the LCIS in May of 2011 to discuss, at that time, the various events held in the Irish college in an attempt to secure better access. What became clear through the meeting was that there was thought to be a ‘preternatural’ interest in Irish Studies, and in the culture generally, among students at the faculty of Letters (Arts faculty). I was asked to translate certain sections of the website into Irish, and I floated the idea of providing a class to students interested in the Irish language. The idea was well-received and in the summer of 2011, I set about constructing a scheme of work which would attempt to touch upon the Irish language, short films on (or in) the Irish language and finally on various aspects of culture, broadly stated as it was.

TEACHING IRISH(NESS) IN LEUVEN

The first Irish class took place in the Erasmushuis, MSI building by the faculty of Letters in KU Leuven on a rainy Wednesday afternoon in October of 2012. I stepped into the darkened classroom to discover 18 people already seated, quietly, and I asked them if they would mind writing out their names, nationalities and email addresses on slips of paper; rather than making some kind of distinction between the different nationalities, the only reason it was necessary to ask was to see whether there were any nationalities that I might not know in Irish on command and this was indeed the case. The cultural makeup of the group was broad, including people from both Belgium and Ireland as well as Egypt, Bulgaria and China. Over time, attendance waxed and waned; some classes would just simply be on the topic of discussing certain ‘must-see’ areas in Ireland to prospective holidaymakers, at certain class-members’ insistence. The classes themselves acted as food for thought too, where spontaneous meditations about the calibre of Irish writers, emotional contributions on the Great Famine’s impact on the Irish language as well as interesting constructions (taken in their entirety) from ‘Google translate’ were recited verbatim.

More often than not, and not at my prompting, there was the invariable suggestion of an after-class coffee or pint in the local which was

named 'Ron Blacks' at the time and has since been renamed 'Chapter 4', on Ladeuzeplein, Leuven. Fewer people would be in attendance and it was possible to get to know some class participants on a more personal basis; it was in this way that I came to know Shane. Shane was a man in his late thirties who was required, as part of an Irish Studies programme in Galway, to relocate to another Erasmus-affiliated University for a period of one semester.

Shane's partner had a four-year-old son, whom he missed dearly, and his partner was conversant in Irish; this was his primary motivation in joining the Irish classes, coupled with the fact that he felt somewhat isolated in Leuven. Shane hails from a part of County Mayo with which I am very familiar, and it was not long before after-class drinks turned into early evening drinks. He was a regular at the Irish bar in Leuven, with a specific interest in watching football matches, and we would often meet there for further informal conversations about the Irish language.

We became closer and I would often receive emails outlining the times at which certain matches were to be held accompanied by a brief note saying that he would be at 'most of them' and that I was welcome to join him, which I did with increasing frequency in November and December of 2011. He was well-liked by the staff of the Irish pub; he was well-versed in football knowledge, followed a slightly unconventional team, Liverpool, and was often the subject of well-meaning derision for having the appearance of a Viking.²⁴ He had eked some comfort out of frequent visits to the Irish pub and the only occasion on which I did not see him there was when I found him in a McDonalds, which he referred to as 'The Irish Embassy'. One evening I mentioned my research topic to him and he became very effusive on the topic of the Europeanisation of Ireland. He remarked that although he had always noticed the signs which read 'Part financed by the European Union', which adorn the roads to and from his hometown, he had never paid any heed to them. Citing reasons of a certain lack of commonality among Europeans, he remarked that his stay in Leuven was more akin to a stay in a hotel in that it would be impossible to see any meaningful links being established in and between guests beyond something temporary. Shane had very little time for the notion that travel somehow brought along, in tow, the notion of an expansion of one's horizons.

I mean, you see, I feel like I am an exile here. My college requires that I go abroad for three months only to go back. I don't really know why either.

I think they think that they're giving me something that I am actually not getting here... I won't be returning a different man. (Shane)

Shane rejected the notion of a concurrent relation between travel and the adoption of something resembling a new world-view. Travelling from Ireland, which for him was not desirable, was something that was thrust upon him; his desire was not to become something different, just to get a credit requirement. It was not especially difficult to see why this was the case either. He longed for his partner, they spoke frequently on Skype, and he immersed himself in the closest approximations of Irish cultural simulation possible in Leuven, Irish classes, Irish conversationalists and the Irish pub.

One evening I thought to ask about what he thought the role played by the LIIE was, given that their central goal was to maximise the benefits of European integration to the Irish residents in Leuven. He told me that he was unaware of its existence at all. He was not alone, and rather than viewing Shane's dilemma as being an anti-cosmopolitan view (cosmopolitanism as it is formulated by Molz and Gibson [2007], Nowicka and Rovisco [2009], and Thomson and Taylor [2005]) we might instead examine the manner through which the LIIE is fulfilling its mission by Europeanising the students who pass through Leuven. What are the informal networks through which Irish students come into contact with each other?

The LIIE has no outreach programme to the Irish students who come and stay in Leuven for whatever amount of time, save for those who work directly for them. There seems to be little or no mutual awareness of the two operations in Leuven, possibly owing to the limited advertising for Irish-themed events which occur on its grounds. There is also a *de facto* limitation of the possibility for any interested party to peruse the grounds for the reasons given above. The centrality of the historical importance played by the location has resulted in a lack of ongoing engagement of any kind. The aims and efforts of Europeanisation undertaken by the college, then, might be viewed as having fallen short. One possible reason for this is the site's ambiguous ownership and its quasi-autonomous status, as mentioned above. It can hardly be surprising, then, that if one of the missions of the LIIE, to maximise the benefits of EU membership, is to come to pass it will require acknowledging the social processes and pathways by which people attempt to belong. The historical importance of the Irish language to the Irish college is an

additional important component thereof though, and re-inciting interest in the Irish language in Leuven had drawn my attention back to the manner in which Irishness is perceived by non-Irish people.²⁵

Over time, the classes became a conveyance through which it became possible to come into contact with both Irish students and Flemish students who had an interest in learning the language, and so I petitioned the LCIS to hold a subsequent series of classes in early 2012. The second wave of classes, beginning September 2013, was commissioned shortly thereafter and little to no preparation was required concerning lesson plans. The classes were held at the same time of the week, but this time in a larger lecture theatre. What I had not anticipated, however, was the attendance at the second wave of classes; 90 or so people were present at the first lecture and each of the steps leading to the chairs at the back of the auditorium were occupied. This interest has served to point my attention to the fact that there was a sincere interest in learning the Irish language in Leuven. This was evidenced by the voluntary forfeiture of a lunch hour in favour of practicing Irish.

Advertisements for the classes had spread throughout Toledo²⁶ and by word of mouth to departments outside of the department of letters. I was also sought out by a journalist, working for the KU Leuven-run newspaper the 'Campuskrant', who asked for a meeting to discuss the course's appeal and popularity. I sat with the reporter, outlined my interest in the Irish language and discussed the research question I was investigating as part of my doctoral research. "'Gaeilge for Dummies" classes are a surprise hit' was the tagline that ran in the Campuskrant issue later that month. I was also approached by another journalist that same month and both Het Nieuwsblad and De Standaard ran identical versions of an article entitled: 'Stormloop op lessen Iers aan KU Leuven'. While the text was published in Dutch, the journalist in question, Isabel van Tenderloo, was kind enough to send me a translated version whose title read: 'Big Rush on Irish lessons at KU Leuven'. I was also invited to speak on Channel Vier's news-magazine style TV show, 'Kruitfabriek',²⁷ but was unavailable at the time of filming.

The general trend among the pieces written about the courses was the drive and dedication demonstrated by the students, whose efforts were at the foreground of most of the pieces. The desire observable by Flemish students, willing to forego a lunch break in order to commit to learning (in most cases, *yet*) another language, appears front and centre of the pieces. With a greater volume of dedicated students, some of whom

were Irish, after-class coffees became expanded and went on even longer. I became close with certain ‘die-hards’ who, for reasons other than I had observed the previous year, had a sincere desire to soak up as much Irish culture as possible. I would receive emails enquiring about certain turns-of-phrase in Hiberno-English which were thought to have had an Irish etymology,²⁸ questions about which ‘do-it-yourself’ Irish textbook I would recommend, as well as questions about Irish culture more generally. I was often approached outside of the MSI building by students interested in demonstrating the extent of their Hibernophilia (love of all things Irish) to me as I listened; I remember one student, who I saw on only two occasions remarking, ‘I am so into Ireland that I have a flag of it over my bed!’ The pride with which this statement was uttered is difficult to overstate. It was at one time a strong claim to a common belonging and a testament to the possibility of Irishness as a signifier that has common roots. This is examined cursorily in the next section and at length in the chapter which follows.

THE IRISH PUB IN BELGIUM: CULTURAL HOMES AWAY FROM HOMES

My fieldwork has lead me to the observation that the culture envisioned and represented by the Irish college is an older model of culture, envisioned in works such as those by Matthew Arnold. Arnold believed that civilisations, when representing themselves, do so in a manner indicative of high culture and which is distinct from those representations that envision culture to be a more dialogical process where no one owns the monopoly of rights over an intangible heritage. Arnold writes:

The pursuit of perfection, then, is sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works only for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. (Arnold 1993: 78)

This crystalline, perfect model of cultural works undertaken in the pursuit of a kind of perfection, at which one can only marvel and not interact with, is almost certainly the brand of culture envisioned by the LIIE. My interjection here intends only to sever the notion that classical objects of culture—artworks, musical recitals, stagecraft, etc.—are

quite different from less conventional kinds of cultures, 'subcultural' involvements, online communities and much more. To that end, the culture represented here is primarily of the reified kind. As the example of the Irish classes has shown though, the transition between the studious transmission of an ancient language and the communal sharing of jokes over a few beers can simply be a matter of minor degrees. What is more is that the view that there is such a thing as high or low culture can lead to the generation and further transmission of taste, an imaginary construction that reifies difference.

Bourdieu (1984) attempted to understand how one's choice of consumption (either symbolically or literally) hierarchicalises people in terms of their level of refinement and how it is constitutive of class difference. Bourdieu writes:

[T]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu 1984: 6)

Here, taste and refinement are co-joined with the notion of a culture which is enclosed, viewed from tiered seating, interpreted, and which is thought to assist in ameliorating feelings of exile by exposure to Irish culture. Culture is not thought to be here of the anthropological sort, but instead must be thought of something akin to a battleground on which discriminatory taste distinctions are structured in an oppositional manner between 'high' and 'low' culture. High culture is here the primary conveyance through which representations are transmitted at culturally themed events.

The character and manner in which the functions which are expected to be performed by the LIIE broadly concern Europeanisation, and capitalising upon the benefits thereof, as well as the representation of 'Irish culture'. The two expressions of culture are not so discrete as mentioned in terms of the Irish classes though; separating the drinking that accompanies listening patiently to the intricacies of the Irish language would be a cosmetic separation only. To that end, we will now turn our attention to the role played by the Irish pub in the life of the Irish community in Belgium, first by reviewing how it has been theorised and then by showing the various interactions that it motivates.

Share (2003) provides a postulation, by the time of writing it was a point that was under-theorised, on what the exact composition of a public house—or pub—is by discerning eight features that are common to, but do not totally typify, their present situation: neutral ground, a leveler, a place in which conversation is the main activity, they are accessible, are occupied by regulars and/or familiar faces, low-profile, are playful and, finally, serve as a home away from home (Share 2003: 30–34). It is the final feature that I wish to stress and place the emphasis upon, due to the very pressing desire among expats to re-discover a home away from home. Pubs are places which bisect the dichotomy of home/work, and it is for this reason that they are referred to as ‘third places’. The Irish pubs serve a similar function in Belgium, but which possess a few variations on this theme; for instance, the desire to find a place in which to have a conversation varies considerably from the desire to have a conversation entirely in one’s own language. This gives the Irish pub a kind of centrality where linguistic competence, or one’s own inclination or the time requirement in which to acquire that same competence in either French or Dutch, may be lacking.

Among the many charms that Irish pubs are thought to possess, the chief among them is the possibility of conversing in English fluently, both with staff and patrons during any sporting or musical event. The presence of the English language gives people the feeling that they have found a home away from home. The use of English primarily is enforced through a practice which I have observed countless times; welcomes to the bar are often proffered in advance of any order being placed: ‘Fine evening! What can I get ye?’, ‘How are ye? What’re you having?’ Establishing English as the language through which the rest of the conversation will be conducted is an interesting semantic practice to ensure that all dealings with bar staff continue in a likewise manner. It is also very frequently the case that bar staff, in their downtime, will speak to regulars in English and will do so in an audible manner.

The informal character of Stapletons in Leuven, and other Irish pubs of its kind, lent themselves very readily to ethnographic interviews and conversations which took place as I visibly jotted down field notes. The pub, it should be remembered, also bears many similarities to a home-space, given the centrality of the hearth, a television, the presence of hot food (even though it is for sale, in a different manner to home) and the presence of a social support network, so much so that it can be

recaptured as a home away from home, and these features include the language, but also the presence of the hearth:

At a basic (reflex) level, the shift is surprising if only because the life-path of a human being moves naturally from "home" to "world," from "hearth" to "cosmos." We grow into a larger world. Not to do so is to lead a stunted life. (Tuan 1999: 2)

Tuan closes the work with a restatement of the, in his view, contradictory composition of something akin to a 'Cosmopolitan Hearth'; the hearth is always subject to change and dynamism which occurs all around it. What typifies the cosmopolite, then, is the view which holds that the things gained exceed the things lost (*ibid.*: 187–188). The hearth of the third place, which serves as a temporary place by which to rest, is a simulated one though. It is not the hearth of the home, but instead is one reproduction of it. The hearth, though, may be a place to which people have no desire to return having been exposed to the cosmos, however, as one informant formulated it:

I like Stapletons, oddly, because you walk in there and you're reminded of two things; wow, this is why I am here and this is why I left. I can't bear it at times. I try to go only if I have people over (from Ireland) and otherwise I wouldn't. I mean why would you, when beer here tastes like [...] I mean, when it tastes like what it's supposed to taste like! (James)

James brings friends to Stapletons in order to show how the home place has been situated, abroad but for that reason solely. This can, however, become something more than just a kitschy reproduction though, as I was informed, and may in fact become something more akin to the closest approximation of a 'hearth' in Leuven. Once I invited two participants, Nathalie and Declan, on a bike ride of the greater Leuven area. These were areas just beyond comfortable walking distance and which included Castle Arenberg, Kessel-Lo 'provincie domein' (a large national park) and the small adjacent village of Heverlee; they were very forthcoming both about the many attractive qualities that Leuven seemed to possess and the desire that other staff members of the LIIE might experience something similar. The reason for this being, they said, was the limitations encountered in the 'small circuit' around which most of their daily lives were structured. This circuit, I was told, extends from the

residence of the personnel working in the LIIE, their place of work, the next nearest Pub (*De Giraf*, or the Giraffe, a small pub on an open market square of *Oude Markt*²⁹) and then the Irish Pub and, occasionally, to a late café around the corner. This track covers just over one kilometre, approximately, and appears to be the primary route by which the staff of the Irish college orient themselves and serves as the primary frame of reference for Leuven to the staff at the LIIE. The same asymmetry that is observable among the students attending KU Leuven's lack of awareness of the Irish college is also observable with respect to the lack of integration on the part of the staff at the LIIE therefore. Theirs is a well-trodden track, to work and back, to the *De Giraf* and thereafter to the Irish pub and back. For a time, and after having been apprised of this track, it became possible to show up at *De Giraf* and to be greeted by a cohort of the staff of the Irish college on the terrace, an opportunity of which I frequently availed.

It was on this cycling trip too, after having learned about the limited exposure Irish employees of the LIIE have with Leuven in general, that I began to approximate the overfamiliarity of some with only a few landmarks as being indicative of a kind of certain dejection. When I probed as to why the hinterlands of Leuven might be of interest to other members of staff I received a curious response; I was met with a curt: 'So that they might hate it less. I mean, less than they do that is' (Declan). This dejection seems largely to stem from the fact that Stapletons functions, as we have also observed in Shane's case, as a site which is non-transformative in kind and serves as a kind of outpost or halfway house of familiarity (both in terms of company, varieties of beer and language). This, in itself, is no bad thing but it certainly disallows or forecloses upon the possibility of encountering kinds of Europeanness, articulated in Leuven, in its own terms rather than refracted through an Irishness-tinged lens. The LIIE are, then, falling slightly short of their mission to make abundantly clear to the Irish in Leuven the merits of European belonging; instead, what appears to shine through is the tendency to adopt Stapletons as a conveyance of belonging. Acts of homing, as described below, should be thought of as occurring to varying degrees of officialdom, as sanctioned by the LIIE or otherwise, and occur as an abreaction to a felt-isolation.

Transnational 'homing' or the re-visitation of one's roots occurs both at the institutional level and at the informal levels. Examining only one representation of a culture that is thought to be indicative of the entire

nation of Ireland is to only place one kind of value upon artistic fare which, in effect, raises one to the level of high-art while ignoring the other; discrimination on the grounds of taste is pertinent to note here. Walsh (2006) analyses, in the instance of British migrants to Dubai, a variety of efforts undertaken to ensure that even though they have expatriated, they can still orient themselves towards the national discussion of belonging and what it means to belong. Although I have chosen not to articulate this in the same manner as Walsh, who prefers to locate belonging within belongings, understanding the centrality of supplementing and compensating for one's dislocation in time and space is central to this project's material cultural aims:

With the consumption of *Spaced* and other British comedy such as *Ali G* and *Bo Selector* (sic), DVDs that are clearly British in their setting and humor, watching contributes to the maintenance of a particular subsection of British culture and a particular sub-national sense of home... This is especially true for a diasporic culture who recognize their distance in the mediation of the DVD or video but can continue to be involved in dialogue about a national sense of belonging through a nationally produced visual culture. (Walsh 2006: 136–137, emphasis in original)

There are certainly plenty of examples of DVD-sharing and film nights among the Irish migrants of the Leuven and Brussels contexts respectively, including *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, *Father Ted* and (particularly apposite and essential viewing to many given their surroundings) *In Bruges*. These examples of homing, particularly in relation to the Irish community in Belgium's love of *In Bruges*, are shared and become part of a shared repertoire and are examined in the final chapter of this work.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In closing, this chapter has attempted to provide an examination of the function of the LIIE, as well as Stapletons, in attempting to imbue members of the diaspora with a sense of an ostensible continuity with their home place. This continuity is troubled, occasionally obscuring the dynamics of presence and absence, belonging and non-belonging. In proposing two different 'cultures' (one 'high', one 'low') it becomes possible to observe that the LIIE does not possess the monopoly over the postulation of an Irish identity, but that the field of Leuven is more

fraught than that and extends as far as Flemish students in class situations and even as far as the non-Irish (whose experiences are examined in the chapter which follows) and who have staked a legitimate claim to the language.

One of the most striking findings of my work in Leuven was, and remains to some degree, the seeming disconnection that the Irish abroad have from one another. The lack of student groups at KU Leuven which seek to involve Irish students specifically, a task to which the closed-off, private nature of the Irish college would be best-suited, means that it is hardly surprising that Stapleton's serves as the primary port of call for many Irish community members in Leuven. These include, as I have analysed in this chapter, makeshift Irish-language classrooms, Flemish bars, Stapletons and the auditorium of the LIIE, albeit far less frequently.

What has been striven for in this chapter is a critique of an unflinching assertion of an immobile, rooted (in terms of time and space) model of Irishness, thought to be Europeanised, and an account of a site in which common conceptions of Irishness are being challenged and re-appropriated; the Irish college is no longer a college in the strict sense, culture is something refined, stable and transmittable but is also something shared and interpretable, and the Irish language is neither dead nor is it spoken by Irish people exclusively. The final claim, which is given a chapter-length treatment, also concerns many of the themes outlined, but which have gone under-addressed; namely perceptions of the Irish community abroad, how the Irish language is employed and the notion of falsehood which is parenthetically attached to the desire to learn Irish by non-Irish people.

NOTES

1. <https://www.rte.ie/news/2014/0131/501337-belgium-fire/>.
2. <http://www.flanderstoday.eu/current-affairs/two-students-die-apartment-fire-leuven>: 'The two women were of Polish and Latvian origin but had Irish nationality, and were on an Erasmus exchange from the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in Ireland, where they were in the second year of a Bachelor of business in the department of hotel and catering management'.
3. <https://www.thebulletin.be/two-students-die-apartment-fire-leuven>.
4. 'Studentenhuis voldeed aan alle brandvoorschriften' (Translation: Student house met all fire regulation). https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2014/01/31/_studentenhuis_voldeedaanallebrandvoorschriften-1-1855020/.

5. <https://nieuws.kuleuven.be/nl/2014/brand-leuven-studentenhuis--ku-leuven-betuijt-medeleven>.
6. They mention do not mention their nationalities in this article: <https://www.hln.be/regio/leuven/iers-instituut-grote-schuldige-in-dodelijke-kotbrand~abddb02d/?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F> or in this one: <https://www.hln.be/regio/leuven/proces-verbaal-voor-onvergunde-opdeling-na-dodelijke-brand-in-studentenhu-is~a340b8d3/>.
7. 'De twee slachtoffers bezaten een Iers paspoort, maar waren van Poolse en Letse afkomst' (Translation: The two victims possessed an Irish passport, but were of Polish and Latvian origin). https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20140131_003.
8. The Annals of the Four Masters are a compilation of medieval chronicles of Ireland which were compiled in Leuven and the full text of which can be accessed online: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100005B/>.
9. For an excellent, albeit slightly dated but comprehensive list of works directly concerning the relationship between language and identity, see Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985).
10. For more, see: <https://www.historyireland.com/uncategorized/printing-in-the-vernacular-the-louvain-project/>.
11. The full text of 'The Mirror of Piety' is available at: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G208020/index.html> and there is the suggestion in the preamble that the desire is to spread the word of God in the simplest manner possible and less attention is paid to the providence of the work itself.
12. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04261c.htm>.
13. This is examined in Chapter 6 with respect to the amendments made to the Irish constitution, Articles 2 and 3, which sought to broaden conceptions of Irish belonging beyond a simple, territorially bounded interpretation. Nothing about the ability to speak in Irish, with respect to claims of belonging, is mentioned.
14. Available here: http://www.leuveninstitute.eu/site/missions/index.php?-doc_id=2. The mission statement is also reproduced on placard which is visible upon entry onto the grounds.
15. The papal bull establishing the foundation of the Irish College is currently in the care of the Michael Ó Cléirigh Institute for the Study of Irish History and Civilisation, UCD Archives, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland and is available here: <http://digital.ucd.ie/get/ivrla:19665/pdf>.
16. O'Connor here uses the French spelling, although it should be noted that the college actually lies in the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium. It is also necessary to note here, given the previous chapter's examination of the role played by Eurocratic elites, that the publication of O'Connor's work coincided with the recasting of the vote for the 'Lisbon Treaty', and

so the necessity of aligning Ireland and Europe's fates, should be read as a political act.

17. This quote appears to be apocryphal but serves its function well in establishing the position occupied, by the Franciscans at least, by members of the Irish community abroad.
18. The full speech, save for the comment about exile being something almost culturally endemic to Irish people, can be accessed here: http://www.leuveninstitute.eu/php/newsroom/details.php?doc_id=737. The speech itself contains many direct references to the text borrowed either from the website of the LIIE, which details the content of most, but not all, of the multimedia displays which hang in large lightboxes on the walls of the inner cloister.
19. "State gives €12m for Irish College facelift" by Hilary Leech appeared in the *Sunday Times* newspaper on the 10th of February, 2013, available here: <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/ireland/article1211337.ece>.
20. The Irish word Oireachtas means, roughly, Parliament and has its roots in the word airech meaning nobleman.
21. Committee of Public Accounts. Held 2 December 2010. For the entire proceedings, see: <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/ACC/2010/12/02/printall.asp>.
22. The full text is available: http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/committees30thdail/pac/additional_documents/correspondence2011/document12.pdf.
23. The LCIS describes itself as follows: The LCIS is a multi- and interdisciplinary research centre of the Humanities and Social Sciences of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and is based in the historic Irish College in Leuven.
24. This is especially prophetic as Shane did a stint as an extra in the History Channel's Television series 'Vikings'.
25. This is a topic to which the following chapter is dedicated.
26. Toledo is described as a Virtual learning environment, and it is the way through which students have access to Lecture materials, submit essays and receive bulletins about any alterations to their assessments. Toledo is also an anagram of 'TOetsen en LEren Doeltreffend Ondersteunen' which can be roughly translated as: 'Tests and learning effective support'.
27. The most approximate translation I have found for KruitFabriek is 'Powder mill' or 'Powder Factory.'
28. I received a transliterated section from Greta on the meaning of Banbh, a word which at first glance has no resemblance to any English word, but which in fact was an affectionate term meaning 'piglet' and is a word used to refer to a child.
29. The 'Oude Markt' (or Old Market in Dutch) is a popular nightspot in Leuven and comprises 34 bars along a rectangular terrace which all face one another.

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Non-Irish, Irish Speakers Among the Irish Community in Belgium

One completely unanticipated side effect of this project's examination of the Irish community in Belgium is the fact that this community is comprised of more people than one might expect. Whether it is through hibernophilia (the consumption of Irish-themed goods) or through speaking the Irish language itself, there is a great deal of interaction between the Irish in Belgium and others. The commitment to learning the Irish language is the most striking example of this kind of engagement, again given the low uptake of the language in Ireland, simply by dint of the sheer number of hours required to practise it to an expert 'native' level; this achievement is even more impressive given the common complaint of the lack of conversational partners in Belgium (the Ciorcal Comhrá discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3 notwithstanding). One's affinity for a culture, whichever culture that may be, is conditional on a level of certitude or intersubjective verification, as we have observed. This chapter examines the extent to which different claims to belonging are tolerated by the Irish community in Belgium as well as the grounds on which those claims are based.

This chapter takes as its point of departure the efforts taken by non-Irish people to learn the language and reviews the manner in which their efforts are received, resisted and might be theorised. This chapter also examines the manner in which other claims of belonging, quite apart from the language, have occurred historically in the UK in the 1960s. These claims are cast in terms of being indicative of the interlocutor's misguided or deceptive efforts, by way of a false consciousness, and can

yield an illusory form of continuity and belonging. From the previous chapter, we carry forward the notion that Irish pubs, because they are reproductions of hearths, are simulations; the simulation expressly analysed in this section is that of the Irish language by non-Irish people.

This chapter aims to understand the positions of pretence and simulation, here thought of as a copy or approximation of another object, by locating it within the contextual examination of non-native Irish speakers in Belgium. We can, through an examination of how the Irish language is used by the non-Native speaker, call into question and challenge some of the dominant presuppositions concerning authenticity, how it is deployed, and the postmodern manner in which it might be explored. Ethnographic vignettes are provided from among a small sample of the non-Native Irish-speaking population in Belgium in order to draw out the complexities of notions of falsehood and authenticity. The question of the relation between the Irish community abroad and the Irish community at home is suggested as being one which is asymmetrical and which often incurs reduction to a state of false consciousness or otherwise disingenuous relation to the slippery concept of 'Irishness'. This question is set against the backdrop of those who are not thought to be Irish *per se*.¹

'Is teanga sár speisialta é- agus bhíonn a lán daoíní *speisialta* é a labhairt'

'Irish is a special language, and it attracts a lot of *special* people who speak it' (Caoimhe discussing a Bulgarian man's ability to speak Irish).²

I wish to begin by providing a vignette which summarises how we might situate and accommodate claims in anthropology that stretch credulity or demand overlooking those things upon whose meaning they depend.

'IT'S FAKE. I MEAN IT SOUNDS THE SAME, BUT IT'S FAKE' LANGUAGE AND SIMULATION

Catalin Milev is an Irish-speaking Bulgarian man in his 40s who lives in Leuven, Belgium. He is an active member of the Irish language community and is involved in two separate Ciorcail Comhrá (Irish language conversation circles). It was at one such meeting, held monthly in Brussels, which was quite poorly attended that I was invited back to Catalin's house to drink Lagavulin³ and to listen to traditional Irish music.

Perusing the floor-to-ceiling bookcases that were filled end-to-end with Celtic inspired CDs, DVDs and books I was once again struck by Catalin's affinity with everything Irish. As I turned around to relay this, I observed him busying himself at his VCR. 'One moment' he said. All of a sudden I could see a high-budget, magazine-style television show on which everyone was speaking Bulgarian. Catalin could be seen in the distance, and upon being prompted, he began speaking to the interviewer in Bulgarian. One quick lapse dissolve later, the scene opened on his three-piece band. Catalin began playing his bouzouki and the band's female vocalist burst into song in the Irish language. I wondered aloud whether she was as fluent a speaker as Catalin. 'No- It is fake. I mean it sounds the same, but it is fake'.

Catalin let the music play and we sat. He explained the painstaking rehearsals during which he would write out the lyrics of every song for an entire hour-long repertoire. Each lyric, borrowed from one of his favourite bands, was written out in Irish and Bulgarian (so that the lyricist could capture the emotion being transmitted) and finally in a phonetic approximation so that it could be sung live. The falsehood in the lyrics, however, could not be discerned by the naked ear and I could even hear Catalin's north Donegal inflection⁴ in the songstress's interpretation of the phoneticised lyrics. I had often pried into Catalin's past to discern what it was that had sparked his interest in the language and each time he would respond in terms of a tautology. That evening was no exception: 'No one ever asks: "Why do you love your wife?" You just do. There's not anything more to it than that'.

Catalin's proficiency in the Irish language was also treated as a curiosity among the other Brussels- and Leuven-based Irish speakers he encountered in the field. Anthropologically themed questions were often asked of him in relation to the conditions that gave rise to his desire to learn the language. He would, on every occasion, defer the questions and offer some form of rhetorical response in exchange, such as the one examined in the previous paragraph. After one evening of persistent questioning at an Irish language event held at the Irish college in Leuven, he expressed his frustration. 'It is no weird thing to speak a language. I speak 7 of them. I prefer Irish. I think it sounds like the singing of the angels. It is no weird thing'. Catalin's candour did remind me that earlier in the evening he had been treated as something of a museum oddity and his frustration may have stemmed from the fact that on that

occasion the questions put to him had largely been in English and were asked by people who could not speak Irish themselves.

Despite the strong connections Catalin felt with Ireland, he never claimed to be Irish. The authenticity of his claim to the Irish identity could not be scrutinised, it simply did not exist; he would maintain the same thing both in the conversation and in the semi-structured interviews which were conducted with him. It was not his intention to deceive anyone into thinking differently either. This presented something of a problem when theorising informants such as Catalin. Was it excessive to impose the qualifier of inauthenticity on the simulation of Irish which does not refer to that exact identity? Was it fair to insinuate the proposition of a falsehood upon an informant who had no intention to deceive? The Bulgarian singer, for whom Catalin had transcribed the lyrics, was certainly simulating the language, while Catalin was speaking it and the difference is anything but cosmetic. The section that follows attempts to round out this vignette by examining how the debate surrounding simulation, belonging, deception and difference has been theorised, first by philosophy and thereafter by anthropology.

PHILOSOPHY AND SIMULACRA

Transmitting the exact manner in which postmodern thought has constituted simulations and simulacra necessitates an examination of the philosophy of Jean Baudrillard and Gilles Deleuze in order to set the stage for the manner in which anthropologists have (or might) employ these terms to better understand their field. Postmodernism is typified here by Baudrillard's work (particularly Baudrillard [1999]) and needs to be contextualised, rather than being thought of as something *sui generis*. It is for this reason that we must return to a brief analysis of classical anthropological structuralism. Put concisely, structuralism is here postulated as the study of the existence of culturally meaningful binary opposites in order to elicit their undergirding meaning.⁵ The sensation of hot water makes us aware of cold water and certain prohibitions around food or other types of social convention are indicative of grander patterns of social thought (Douglas 1980, 1996). We know the discrepancies between colours by liberty of what they are not: blue is not pink, not black, not yellow, etc. Here, we enter the domain of thinking along a spectrum, and not exclusively from among diametrically opposed entities, as though on a clear cut 'either this or that' chart through which internal differentiation

becomes meaningful. The casting aside of deterministic binarism allows for a better appreciation of fluidity to come to the fore; this is a topic that I will return to below when the boundaries of inauthenticity and accidental attribution are discussed. The operation of proof ‘by way of negation’ also has its limits, and these are explained by Baudrillard:

Go and organise a fake hold up [...] The simulation of an offense, if it is patent, will either be punished more lightly (because it has no “consequences”) or be punished as an offence to public office (for example if one triggered off a police operation “for nothing”) but *never as simulation*, since it is precisely as such that no equivalence of the real is possible [...]. (ibid. 1999: 178, emphasis added)

We can take simulation to be that which cannot be reduced and which defies a characterisation as ‘something’ in its own right. Simulation, then, cannot be reproduced in a manner that exceeds the reality from which it springs, at least in a manner which would be consequence-free. The Irish pub abroad seems, at first glance, to be an oxymoron for this exact reason. So contingent is simulation upon the representation that it conveys or emulates that the temptation towards reduction is always there; simulation cannot be understood to exist as such in the social field. A similar frustration is outlined by Barthes in his *Mythologies* (1972) in which he staunchly insists that even though wrestling is indeed staged, the fact that it is simulated in no way invalidates the theatricality and showmanship of the performance; reducing stagecraft to a kind of fictive falsehood is to miss the point of the simulation entirely. Simulation cannot be likened to anything and, therefore, it intensifies difference and eludes standardisation. Here, we might review the exact criticism that Derrida levels against the discipline of structural anthropology in *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences* (Derrida 2004 [1967]). Derrida’s work is a sustained critique of classical structuralist thought⁶ through the prism of one notion (that of incest) which cannot be consigned to either of the structural (and therefore intelligible) binaries of nature or culture. Is incest, he asks, a fully natural phenomenon (existing in nature, not-regulated) or is it a cultural phenomenon (requiring restrictions and punishments for those who practise it)?:

[Lévi-Strauss] begins from his axiom or definition: that which is universal and spontaneous and not dependant on any particular culture or any

determinate norm, belongs to nature. Inversely, that which depends upon a system of norms regulating society and therefore is capable of varying from one social structure to another, belongs to culture. [The scandal, ed.] which no longer tolerates the nature/culture opposition he has accepted, something which *simultaneously* seems to require the predicates of nature and culture. The scandal is the incest prohibition. The incest prohibition is universal, in the sense that one could call It natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural. (Derrida 2004 [1967]: 357, emphasis in original)

Derrida's observation is here well illustrated and evidenced. Derrida not only mentions that simultaneity (evidenced by the notion that incest is both cultural and natural) is a trend that runs throughout not just anthropology, but also the social sciences generally.⁷ This renders the efforts made to discern between perspectives, such as the perspective of whether something is authentic or not, a problematic venture.⁸ What remains clear, however, is given the pervasiveness and variety of usage of a concept as broad as differentiation, we still retain the position of being able to interpret how difference emerges in empirical capacities:

There are more than enough indications today to suggest that we might perceive that these two interpretations of interpretation- which are absolutely irreconcilable even if we live them simultaneously and reconcile them in an obscure economy- together share the field which we call, in such a problematic fashion, the social sciences. (ibid. 370)

What is important to emphasise is the pivotal role that Derrida's work has played in the construction of post-structural anthropology. Deleuze maintains something similar by taking issue with Baudrillard's notion of difference, namely by objecting to the notion that differences between simulacra and thing can be discerned at all:

[T]he motive of the theory of ideas must be sought in a will to select and to choose. It is a question of "making a difference", of distinguishing the "thing" itself from its images, the original from the copy, the model from the simulacrum. (Deleuze 1990: 253)

Immediately, however, Deleuze turns his attentions to the tenability of this kind of claim. He attempts to replace the notion that it is possible to have any undifferentiated impartial reality, against which the simulacra

can be derived as being something akin to philosophical false-friends and contends instead that we are destined only to select from among them as to which is foundational and which is not. Deleuze attempts to fortify this point by making reference to humans, in their postlapsarian capacity, as being simulacra. He writes:

The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance. The catechism, so much inspired by Platonism, has familiarized us with this notion. God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost the resemblance while maintaining the image. We have become simulacra. (ibid. 257)

Deleuze's self-styled Neo-Platonism⁹ allows us to think not of the interstices between difference (discerning the pretender from the heir proper), but instead calls into question the monadic structure to something akin to the undifferentiated same in the first place.

Having examined philosophy's take on simulation and difference, I wish to turn now to anthropological accounts of similar phenomenon. Ethnographic examples will serve as excellent guiding points for how we might intelligently reconstitute and recontextualise the role played by difference in intercultural encounters. In order to determine whether simulation and difference, in whatever form they are expressed in the social field, can be related to one another, we must turn to empirically borne out anthropological studies.

ANTHROPOLOGY, OTHERNESS AND FAKENESS

I wish now to dethrone Baudrillard and Derrida in order to provide some examples from anthropology. This section examines the anthropological fascination with representations as simulations and their increasing interdependence. Bruner's exploratory work examines the conditions of possibility of an 'authentic reproduction', a credible, historically sound model of an historical site in New Salem which claims to be 'Lincoln's Salem' (Bruner 1994). The question of the hermeneutic possibility of a historical site, unchanged since Lincoln's time and available to the public as though via a time machine, is patently impossible in strict terms; however, these strict terms do not apply to a simulation of that same context. Might the spectator be tempted to consign themselves, sight unseen, to the position that the curators are guilty of attempting to dupe the public?

Bruner's critique pushes to one side Baudrillard's notion of the superabundance and parenthetical passive consumption of inauthentic experiences in favour of a more multidimensional and layered interpretation; this view is instructive here. Tourists, history-buffs and consumers alike cannot all be thought of in one monolithic manner as passive conduits for the soaking-up of meaning, but rather as active agents who imbue the site with their own meanings; while Bruner does not deny that tourists *can* passively soak up nostalgia, he also reveals that others come to question various historically informed notions of progress, to recreate their foundational mythos and to commemorate traditional America's ethos of struggle, upward mobility and hard work (ibid. 1994: 410–412).

This simulation of 'Lincoln's Salem', we might postulate, can invite and cater for different interpretations rather than relying solely on a reduction to the original and thereby being viewed as something lesser, as an imposter. Plasquy (2012) has written about the fact that if one were to witness a ritual being enacted by Spanish immigrants in Belgium, the onlooker might be tempted to reduce or otherwise consign the phenomenon to an approximation of the original, authentic display which is thought to occur in their homeland. The commonly held view of a given cultural phenomenon might be that it is performed authentically at 'home' and in a diluted form if it is simulated anywhere else. This interpretation homogenises difference and eschews that which is really enacted in the following way:

[T]he moment of *romería* has come to imbue the Spanish community with a very profound, authentic sense of pride and belonging. As such, the *romería* in Vilvoorde was never and never will be an exact copy of an existing Spanish example; instead, it needs to be approached as the outcome of a creative process that has its primary locus within the specific context of this Spanish migrant community. (Plasquy 2012: 91, emphasis in original)

Here, both the authentic-by-way-of-negation (it is real because it is not fake) and the reduction to pure simulation (this event is 'staged' or is a lie) fail fully to account for the ritual being enacted in a manner similar to that of reducing Lincoln's Salem to inauthentic reproduction. Craciun (2012) has also stated the need for anthropologists to eschew understandings that reduce, or worse actively castigate and otherwise, these complexities; instead, we might think of the inauthentic thing as an *equally true representation* of any given phenomenon:

The fake is seen as a copy that does not hide its true nature...The common notion of a fake implies an intention to deceive: the fake is produced with the intention of making someone believe that it is indiscernibly identical with another object. (Craciun 2012: 847)

Here, we have arrived at the heart of the matter and have approximated that which anthropologists can better come to understand in order to resolve the constant prefacing of an event as fake, inauthentic, akin to, like or resembling another thing.¹⁰ If any given phenomenon does not have an intention to deceive or to conceal itself somehow, then how might it be thought of as being inauthentic? The inverse is equally true and is a feature of the Beijing Silk Market, according to Pang and Sterling (2013); rather than thinking of consumers who purchase goods which are knock-offs as somehow having been misled, we might, instead, think that their decisions have been undertaken by their own volition, are imbued with agency and with their full awareness:

Customers who come to buy famous brand-name goods are well aware of their “inauthentic” status, yet are eager to buy them in spite of, or perhaps, because of their “authentic inauthenticity”, as they know that they are buying fashionable product from which satisfaction is derived. Both vendors and customers are aware of the knock-off status of the goods available at the market, yet the closer the item appears to the “original”, the higher the desirability of the item to the customer. The vendors who are able to convincingly create a feeling of reassurance in the quality of the knock-off are those who are the most successful in their sales techniques. (Pang and Sterling 2013: 226–227)

This is a situation which is unthinkable in Baudrillard’s model of the simulacra, and the passive consumption thereof, given the desire and mutual interplay in the reassurances provided as to the quality of the ‘inauthentic authentic’ good. Here, we can enquire after the reasons behind the importance with which claims, which arise from any given spectator—philosophers and laypeople alike—come to be imbued with meaning. What is actively being resisted, here and by the anthropological literature outlined in this section, is the pervasiveness of the claim of false consciousness on the part of any actor who is believed to be lost among a superabundance of signs and meanings. Pang and Sterling’s work reminds us that the act of selection from among goods, authentic or otherwise, when occurring in situ, is in fact an act that

eschews the temptation to conflate certain kinds of consumeristic behaviour with their somehow having been misled. This possibility, which is always present in the field of simulation and authentication, is one which is critiqued in Deleuze who gives primacy to the notion of the desire to differentiate which is acted out by the onlooker and which cannot be said to take place at the intersubjective level.

Jackson (2008), when writing about the difficulties faced by undocumented Sierra Leonian migrants in London, describes a process of 'passing'. What is meant by passing is the seamlessness between self and other that allows for 'passing' to occur. 'Passing' concerns semblance, similarity and intersubjective acceptance. Jackson's ethnography concerns migrants who affect a North-London approximation of the retort: 'what?' to their being accosted. The key to passing in this manner was to mimic the accent of the locals, such that your presence was tacitly accepted.¹¹ This phenomenon is ascribed, in Slattery (2011), as a judgement which is somehow innate to Irish people and which begins at the local level and emanates outward:

The practical approach if you find yourself in this position [if you should move to Ireland, ed.] is not to become Irish but to *pretend* to be Irish. We Irish will always be able to tell the difference even if you can't... [Plastic Paddies, ed.] think they are really Irish but it is practically impossible to fake it. (Slattery 2011: 38, emphasis added)

Authenticating procedures are very interesting and deserve further scrutiny.¹² Slattery's account here is an attempt at a wry transmission of the state of affairs concerning the lack of seamlessness of Irish culture and its receptivity to Others. It is curious that Slattery's more programmatic account of Irishness, released in 2011 and entitled *How to Be Irish: Uncovering Curiosities of Irish Behaviour* should end on such a fatalistic note. One cannot become Irish but instead, according to Slattery, can only pretend to be Irish. This remark also stands in contrast to an earlier examination of the role played both by the notion of simulation to ethnographic examination and to the relation that simulation has to the rise in procedures of authentication:

Simulation is the postmodern mode of signification that produces an economy of signs through which we think ourselves in culture and through which we communicate. Obviously the meaning of simulations often

escapes us at a conscious level, so there is a need to unpack their cultural values: this is the heuristic strategy... The idea of authenticity belongs to history at the level of history's relation to reality, but it belongs to post-modern experience in terms of authenticating procedures. (Slattery 2003: 146–147)

It is at that very point in the ethnographic process that the author has to resign himself to the fact that his efforts to discover a fully fledged and authentic capitulation of Dublin, which he is doing for the benefit of some academics-cum-tourists whom he is showing around the area, is doomed to failure. Slattery's interjection seems both to be that there exists something akin to a safety net which, *a priori*, allows people to make a determination of the kind that you are *not* from Ireland while acknowledging that authenticity has faded into the middle distance, but that authenticating procedures still loom large. That being said, I have never seen Catalin as happy as on the occasion on which he was mistaken for a 'native'. This was an occasion on which the force of authentication was not as all-pervasive as Slattery contends that it is among Irish people. Returning to the example given previously, as to whether Catalin was attempting to deceive or to 'pass' among the people with whom he spoke, there was one occasion upon which I observed the exact manner in which Catalin would appreciate how we were represented and it is to this occasion that I wish to turn in the following section.

WHEREABOUTS IN DONEGAL ARE YOU FROM? MISATTRIBUTION AND PRIDE

An informant having arrived late to conversation who was, herself, completely fluent in Irish joined the table at which myself, Catalin and Emma were all sat. She introduced herself and where she was from to each of us and asked the same of us and we patiently heard from everyone present. Finally, she reached Catalin but having heard his accent her interrogative approach changed slightly. 'Is ea. Agus carbh as I nDun na Gall thú?' ['I see, and whereabouts in Donegal are you from?'] Catalin glanced over at me almost immediately and a massive smile overtook his face. The woman who asked the question was immediately concerned that she had insulted him somehow, but as she was trying to apologise, Catalin interjected saying that there was no need to apologise. He then proceeded to ask everyone what they would like to drink. He was ecstatic,

not to have been mistaken for something he was not, but rather to have passed, without having deceived anyone, as Irish temporarily. Catalin had exceeded narrowly drawn, reductive lines of semblance which are often correlated to legitimacy. This is an instance in which Catalin's hibernophilia became something distinct.

Catalin had become excitable only when he overcame the reduction to a kind of false consciousness, when he came to occupy a broader, seamless Irishness that is a possibility only for a select few. Catalin is not alone in attempts of this kind and other efforts, as mediated through the conveyance of language, assist in the negotiation of the all-too-sharply drawn contours of Irishness and representation.

Passing like this is not always successful and can result in dejection and a profound sense of alienation. The following ethnographic vignette highlights the difficulty in postulating a system in which a person's objective Irishness can be divined. In the formative fieldwork phase, some informants believed that the aim of my ethnographic project was to establish a set of criteria by which a person's 'Irish' pedigree could be established, even after describing the work's actual aims in full. This concern was expressed in the desire for a litmus test by which the authentic might be severed from the inauthentic and is the subject of the vignette, drawn from field notes and conversations, which follows.

I met Emma at an event held by the European Movement International, examined in Chapter 3, which at that time had only one base of operation in Ireland and which has since set up another office in Brussels called, simply, EM Brussels. The event was held in Kitty O' Shea's and was arranged as a meet-and-greet, 'networking event' at which they also launched the new volume of the *Green Book*. I spent the early part of the evening making small talk with some frenetic young professionals working at various echelons in the European Institutions and received many business cards, thrust directly into my palm. Kitty O' Shea's was bustling and filled to capacity and the only area which remained free was an area off to one side in the wings. I moved away to one side after saying goodbye to a Viennese blogger and heard my name being called. Máire was sitting off to one side with a friend and the pair were reviewing some of the business cards, they had received as well as complaining about the noise. I sat down and was introduced to Emma, to some relief from Aoife who, at the end of that month, was scheduled to return home after a 12-month stint in the Faculty of Law of KU Leuven.

Emma and I chatted about life in Leuven and once the chatter had died down and the liaising slowed and then stopped it was possible to outline the project to her in relative peace. She expressed an interest in the research question and we exchanged numbers. We met a number of times over the two months that followed during which time we were able to get to know one another. I became familiar with the eclectic group of Erasmus students with whom she spent time and we both attended football and rugby matches in Stapletons at her invitation. We casually chatted, during which time I made mention of a Primark (a popular clothes retailer in Ireland and elsewhere) situated in Liege and she mentioned that she had been looking for an excuse to travel there and we made an arrangement to travel out that Sunday.

The trip itself was enjoyable, if unremarkable; we saw cyclists on the day on which the *Tour de France* travelled through Liege, we spoke about upcoming prospects, her love-life and the quality of Liege's landmarks, but it was the return journey's conversation that really stood out. We had boarded the wrong train bound for Leuven (an ICE train - a German Eurocities train bound for Frankfurt, rather than on our intended IC intercity train bound for Leuven) and after being scolded by the ticket inspector, our topic turned to the basic components of Irishness. Seated in the interstices of the carriages on either side, so as to avoid further reprimanding, Emma began to outline a wide permutation of situations, each of which concluded with the question of whether what she had outlined would qualify the fictive person she had outlined as being Irish. It began with questions of parentage: 'say someone's mam is Irish, but their dad is from somewhere else but they live in Ireland - does that make them Irish?' The next question concerned migration: 'say both parents are Irish and their child was born in Ireland and they moved away shortly after - does that make them Irish?' Other questions concerned language acquisition, knowledge or engagement with various Irish and non-Irish sports and questions of returning emigrants who settle, but whose children were born abroad. I attempted, in each instance, to enter into dialogue about the question and to parse out the individual components of what would allow us to consider someone to be Irish or not. She was able to cite a number of instances in which someone had thought themselves to be Irish, even though others had resisted that interpretation. Ultimately, and as our train pulled into the station, she confided in me that she had presumed that my work would

serve as a litmus test for whether someone could rightly be considered 'properly Irish' or not and she wished me the best of luck with it.

However, there were other instances in which certain people were less questioning of whether there is or should be a litmus test to discern whether or not someone is sufficiently Irish. Instead, it occurs as a gut response to the entertainment of particular claims. One such instance involved designations of someone's position as 'properly' or 'improperly' Irish and occurred around one year after the previous vignette in Liege. I was fortunate enough to bear witness to this process as it unfolded; in February 2014, I was sitting outside of a pub, at which an Irish person worked, but which is not generally thought to be Irish, and after I had finished speaking over the phone to a friend in English, a stranger tried to spark up a conversation. He had a strong Australian lilt in his accent and began telling me about his girlfriend for whom he was waiting. He then moved on to the topic of my accent and wanted to know, specifically, where I hailed from in Ireland and I obliged. He then told me, proudly, that he was also from Dublin having been born in the Coombe Hospital in North Dublin. As he relayed this story, though, an Irish employee came over, removed some empty glasses and proceeded to disagree. He looked at me: 'He's not Irish. He's not. Just listen to him'. I was caught slightly off guard and my conversation partner had suddenly become sullen and dejected. I remained silent for a moment. 'We're always joking like that', he eventually responded in a hushed voice. A feeling of dejection was palpable and I had also, during my field-work stay, been privy to some efforts which are taken, which fly below the radar of fully passing, which include the self-designation of 'hibernophile' rather than entertaining 'false' notions of Irishness. One interesting dimension of the notion of the propriety of attributions to a particular people group can be observed in examples of discrimination experienced by the Irish in the UK, particularly in terms of certain civilisational ideas of progress and their evolutionary standing. The entirety of the following section is dedicated to teasing out this perception, how it was documented, and how it is being subverted.

'NO IRISH, NO BLACKS AND NO DOGS'

In order to determine whether simulation and difference, when they are expressed in the social field, can be related to one another, we must turn to empirically derived, anthropological study upon the Irish abroad

specifically; specifically, the experiences of the Irish in the UK which were documented by anthropologist Mary Douglas.

Mary Douglas was able to view this phenomenon first-hand, and it is one to which she devoted an article-length analysis entitled *The Bog Irish* (Douglas 1996). In the work, she outlines an etic view of the necessity for strong community bonds among Irish émigrés in the UK:

[Irish emigrants in London, ed.] If they have friends and kin to find them lodgings, their sense of exile is softened by a sense of continuity, the Irish newspapers sold outside Church after Mass, the weekly dances in the parish hall. There is a sense of belonging. If no such welcome is arranged, they are likely to see on the doors of lodging houses: 'No Irish, no coloured'. (Douglas 1996: 39)

Douglas' fears are well-founded and at the time of writing seem to have been somewhat commonplace, although the exact extent of the antipathy has been recently called into question.¹³

The differentiation that is maintained between the English and its Others is long-standing, but for the purposes of illustration, and in attempting to trace a commonality in and between how they were represented, we must turn to the work published prior to this time and which appeared in *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*. As the title of the publication aptly suggests, Harper's appears to have been interested in discerning from among the civilised and the non-civilised through the, then-popular, method of assessing cranial depth, facial types and skin tone which were thought to suggest something about individual's character (Fig. 5.1).

Even by the 1960s, traces of that self-same discrimination, which had become codified, are still in evidence whereby differentiation becomes mapped onto a rejection of an otherness which came to occupy discrete locations in England. Douglas' pronouncement, then, is to establish a community within this climate that can assist more recently arrived migrants to ameliorate their sense of felt exile.

Even within this separation from home place and abroad, though, an internal differentiation begins to appear. The figure of the Irish individual who remained in Ireland occupies the central position from which migrants begin to be differentiated from, by dint of their having migrated. This is a task to which Boas devoted a great deal of critical thought. This is particularly in evidence in his magnum opus



The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

Fig. 5.1 Scientific Racism: H. Strickland Constable. Image in public domain (The text which is illegible in the original reads: 'The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races'.)

Race, Culture and Language (1940) the primary task of which was the examination of broad cultural traits as well as the independent genesis of culture-specific phenomena. A teleological, developmentally inspired structured relativism fell to the wayside and the broader conceptualisation that culture had always been in effect, becoming suffused and diffused globally, came to the fore. In a very Franz Boas-inspired piece, Ralph Linton wrote of the 100% American (Linton 1937) who goes about his morning unaware of the concatenation of alien forces at play in the processing of his food, in the pioneering of his furniture, and in the (re)invention of his very language. At the close of the essay, we have the narrator pronounce, almost expressly rejecting the cultural means which have shaped his life, 'I am 100% American'. The notion of a forgetting,

which allows cut-and-dry statements of this kind to have sway, can be seen as having happened to migrants who, having left Ireland, entered into a pejorative relationship with the people who remained at 'home'. These migrants, over the course of the next generation, came to be known colloquially as 'Plastic Paddies' a pejorative term pointing to their loss of connection with their home place. Mobility and migration become viewed in terms of loss, the separation from the original requiring linguistic denotation in a pejorative manner. What slowly emerges though is a recapturing, by second-generation Irish families, of the derogatory terms employed to demean their claims to belonging.

As members of the diaspora, these second-generation Irish immigrant families in the UK are confronted with the label of 'plastic paddy'.¹⁴ Here, the label of plasticity is something that can be re-appropriated and about which second-generation Irish immigrants can become proud, as Marc Scully (2009) writes:

While acknowledging the potency of the label, appropriating it allows the original pejorative associations of the term to be subverted. 'Plastic'-ness now becomes constructed as a badge of pride, and something that can be proclaimed publicly. (2009: 132)

Similar problematics of discerning an undifferentiated cultural identity, vis-à-vis plasticity, among the Irish diaspora in the UK is also examined in Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2003) and Hickman et al. (2005) and can serve both to suppress difference and to disavow the possibility of an authenticity which is also related to mobility, as demonstrated in Plasquy (2012) above. This is troublesome to anthropologists, not least because it is a tactic employed to ostracise, by ignoring the imagined nature of these communities (Anderson 1983), but also that it ignores that migrant communities are a splinter of Irish society and that they play a more constitutive role in its active outward construction.¹⁵

The section which follows explores the manners in which an affinity for culture is internally layered and considers pretence and language-use. Applying this mode of differentiation to the practice of a language will be illustrated by examining a vignette (which is thought to demonstrate this latent difficulty) and which outlines an interesting programmatic view of language and identity.

THE LIMITS OF PRETENCE: 'YOU CAN'T PRETEND TO SPEAK A LANGUAGE!'

Time was beginning to get away from us. We were in Leuven, Flanders and we could see the ground just outside of the bicycle garage become bright and sunlit and then grey alternately, with increasing frequency, and frustration was setting in. Joseph tapped his foot slightly as an obviously overworked mechanic was readjusting his rental bike. He had tried to deal with the attendant in English at first, but his heavy Northern Irish accent and the pace at which he had spoken had made things difficult. In an effort to expedite the situation Joseph had switched to French, having lived in Brussels for three years, Joseph was fluent and it was the ease and rapidity with which he had acquired the language that had reignited his interest in learning Irish in the first place. This was how we had met. His endeavours to speak in French though had caused a situation of stress to develop into something a bit more political. The attendant stopped, inhaled audibly and asked him to make another attempt, in English, but this time to speak 'sloowly', which had been emphasised. Joseph then withdrew his identity card and the fee for the bike rental and waited patiently, adding only monosyllabic words when prompted. By the time the transaction was complete, Joseph was looking weary and the leisurely Saturday cycle was more necessary than ever. Joseph was one of only two informants I spoke to from Northern Ireland about Irishness and the Irish language; the experiences of Northern Irish people in Brussels specifically would warrant a book-length examination in its own right, and I have been mindful to limit my claims of Irishness to the Republic of Ireland.

In any event, we made sufficient time to arrive at our destination, Castle Arenberg, while the sun still shone. The previous encounter regarding the use of French remained the primary topic for some time afterwards. 'It is a national language though. What if I didn't speak any English?' This conversation quickly evolved into a consideration of the difficulty that would be encountered in Ireland, given its deficiencies regarding multilingualism.¹⁶ The conversation quickly grew into a larger consideration of the relationship between language and culture, and I expressed delight that it had arisen organically.

I interjected only occasionally and what followed was a fascinating parsing out, in real time, of the various aspects of culture that are accessible and those that are less accessible. This is reminiscent of the

distinction in sharing cultural spaces for Saint Patrick's day (time-limited) and speaking the language (time-intensive) documented in Chapter 3 and the roles played by the dual notions of high culture/low culture examined in the previous chapter. What I felt was happening was that Joseph was attempting to posit a reason for Ireland's low uptake of languages generally and of the Irish language specifically. 'I mean some culture, music and GAA and drinking- they don't need anything from you. They are like culture-lite' (Joseph).

A rain shower interrupted our conversation, and we were required to take shelter in a café. It was difficult to seamlessly bring the topic back around to an examination of the language and the role it plays in the composition of culture and so for a time we just listed off some aspects of how our respective lives were going at that specific time. Upon returning from the bathroom, though, I could see that Joseph's mind had wandered back to our previous topic of conversation:

I think this is it. So, say we were out and you said to someone: I'm a doctor and someone said: Prove it. You couldn't *really* but you could still pretend. You could say something you'd heard on House¹⁷ or whatever. All you need is enough. You can't do that with language. You can't pretend to speak a language. Can you speak this language? Prove it! Ah I can't actually. Y'know? (Joseph)

Here again, we touch on the idea that claims-making is contingent on authentication and that this is controlled. Here, we also observe elements of aspects of simulating a language coming to the fore. While this might appear to fly in the face of the possibility of a simulated variety of the Irish language, as indicated in the introductory vignette of this chapter, the example of displaying the Irish language in public, to demonstrate who 'we' are, is a difficult one. How this is imagined is examined in Chapter 6 of this work.

For now it will suffice to mention that the command of a language is contingent upon what Foucault refers to as the paradox of subjectification (Foucault 1994); that is, that you have to slavishly commit yourself to the task of its acquisition in order to obtain a mastery thereof. What is really at work in Joseph's narrative is the contention of pretence, or of a facile relationship to a culture over and above a kind of learned habitual mastery of one of its more time-intensive aspects. Performing a false Irishness, by way of resituating the register through which the Irish

language is understood, is something which certainly does occur; given that the language being simulated is not widely spoken, therefore, the Irish person who engages in this kind of activity might be thought of as also simulating the language. This is demonstrated in the section which follows.

PASSING, PRIDE AND DEJECTION: SIMULATION AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

This chapter began with the claim that one's affinity with a language can depend on the intersubjective acceptance of the claim made to belonging. What is troubling about this assertion is that it presupposes an authorial view, such as the litmus test critiqued previously, but also implies that it cannot be subverted. In truth, it is subverted frequently in Belgium by non-members of the Irish community and the stakes of a successful subversion are very interesting, so too are the risks. There is always a sense of pride in passing and, therefore, of belonging, whether this is achieved through cunning trickery or by way of accidental attribution and it occurs both within and beyond the Irish diaspora. Jan was a textbook example of exactly this phenomenon. A 24-year-old law student at KU Leuven, Belgium, we crossed paths through his enrolment in the Irish classes. He was receptive to the project and spoke directly to this point during a formal interview which became side-tracked onto the topic of his passing for a Scottish person during his Erasmus trip to Scotland. He detailed an occasion on which, while waiting in a queue to use the bathroom, he got talking to a few locals and the pace, pattern and the use of idioms did not change in any identifiable way even after Jan had uttered a few sentences in response; rather than 'betraying' his otherness, his command of the language, informed by his stay abroad, allowed for him to pass. It was only much later that someone retorted to him, in a jovial manner that: 'I thought you were Scottish, bruv!'

Later in our interview, Jan directed the conversation to the necessity of mobility to one's moral worldview, 'we have a duty to see the world and to take it as seriously as we can' (Jan) and to the idea that to achieve citizenship in the world is to live in a world in which the difference between citizenships and the various forms of belongings is diminished greatly, so that more and more people can more easily pass. This coming to pass will allow for a fully fledged cosmopolitanism that, even

though it retains its own difference, a difference that Jan thinks we must bear witness to as citizens of the world, but which because their identity depends upon difference, is wary of counterfeiture. He also alluded to his self-identification as being that of a ‘linguistic hipster’—by that he explained that while the Irish language may not be ‘useful’ to help in achieving his ends, it was certainly not spoken by many people, it was something of a badge of honour precisely because of its inaccessibility.

Each gambit made at passing, whether intentional or otherwise, does invariably have an element of risk to it; while the intention to deceive may not be there, the question of duplicity still looms large. An interesting example of the inner workings of passing, and its parenthetical riskiness, can be observed by examining the experiences of Bert. Bert is a young man, 23, who was a law student at the KU Leuven. He had been told that Irish classes¹⁸ were being offered in Leuven and he wrote me an email to enquire as to whether the class was still in session; the semester had ended at that point, though, and the classes had finished for the year. I extended him an invitation to join me for a cup of tea and a chat to discuss, as he had put it in his email, ‘all things Irish’.

What was most striking upon meeting Bert for the first time was his accent; he spoke in what can only be described as a kind of British-English style of ‘Received Pronunciation’. Agha (2003) refers to ‘received pronunciation’, and this kind of accent, as being a stereotypical pronunciation of English that imbues the speaker with a kind of pre-supposed semiotic capital and importance. While other Anglophones in Belgium had the remnants, or slight lilt of the context in which they acquired English, more or less American, more or less Australian, Bert spoke exactly like a BBC news presenter. On our walk it became clear that Bert was an Anglophile, feverishly devouring literary classics as well as being well-versed in more modern televisual representations (Doctor Who, Broadchurch and others). While it might be more convenient to label Bert as an anglophile, rather than a hibernophile, getting to know more about him over the months which followed indicated that there was more to him than that.

One weekday afternoon, Bert decided to meet me at my office instead of right outside the building in which I worked and interjected into the working day by knocking on the door. He let himself in and introduced himself in English to my colleague, with whom I shared an office, and enquired after her name. She responded and asked him whether he was also Irish; Bert blushed and leaned forward, ‘many, many thanks but no

I am actually not'. He began to chat in Flemish to her as I packed away my belongings. We walked through St. Donatus Park in Leuven on our way to the coffee shop and he greeted friends he recognised in Flemish as we walked. The fact that he was grateful to be mistaken as being Irish stuck with me and I decided to ask him more.

I will go out on a night here in Leuven and pretend to be Scottish. Like (affects a near-perfect Scottish impression). Halloa! I'm from Edinburgh-Where do ya hail from yerself? I mean people want to talk to you. I don't let it go too far or anything. I even once met someone on Parijsstraat who was from Scotland and dropped it straight away, but she smiled and we kept on talking. I don't want people to think I'm from Scotland I just don't want them to think I'm not from there either; keeping people guessing can be jolly good fun! (Bert)

Here, the intention to deceive clearly bears no malicious intention and dialogue, and not deceit, is the most desirable outcome. Bert, like Jan, only desires to suspend the reduction by way of difference through simulation—to render the act of differentiation suspect to the act of deferring or divining a difference which is not immediately on display. 'Being different' and 'being suspicious seeming' are something that they actively try to resist; this does not involve a certain amount of risk though. Howe speaks directly to the risks involved in this kind of outcome-driven engagement:

Regarding risk, shamanic séances are, so to speak, at the extreme end of the scale. Leaders and audience have licence to invent - indeed, this is almost required - so risk is inevitable... rituals are staged to achieve an end, so there is always something at stake in performances. Because the outcome cannot be known in advance, success and failure (however these may be measured: instrumentally, aesthetically, evocatively, morally, etc.) are contingent. Ritual is therefore inherently risky. (Howe 2000: 67)

Again, while Howe's reminder that rituals always bear within themselves the possibility of failure—either of performance or outcome—it must be borne in mind here that the stakes are lower in acts of passing, given that because they are not directed towards intentionally deceiving those at whom they are directed. That said, the stakes still remain, and the possibility of 'failing' looms large, and are outlined in the section that follows.

I met Niels through another participant, a native Irish speaker, and over time he and I would come to spend long hours together over lunch and the requisite coffee thereafter. He was a young KU Leuven student of law, of about 25, who would stay in Keizersberg Abbey, Leuven, while he carried out his studies. He was also incredibly busy, involved in various programmes such as the Model United Nations (MUN), the Model European Union (MEC) and young Fine Gael¹⁹ who were situated in Brussels. From our very first meeting, it became apparent that he was very devoted to the Irish language, as well as to Scot's Gaelic which he had travelled to Scotland to study in 2006. He was a language enthusiast and spoke English, French and Dutch fluently. When I enquired as to how he had come to learn Irish he would detail his elaborate family history, his mother who was from the Philippines, his father who was a Belgian native and his uncle who lived in Ireland had all fostered his desire to acquire many different languages. After providing his kinship map, as a kind of cosmopolitan credential, he mentioned his frequent visits to Donegal and the various studies he had undertaken to learn to speak Irish as proficiently as possible. He became a frequent contributor in the Irish classes offered in KU Leuven and his insight into the Northern Irish dialect was of great assistance in providing a broader oversight of the differences between dialects that can be observed in the Irish language.

However, this desire to contribute to classwork unnerved some other students and he was labelled as having the desire to be 'more Irish than the Irish themselves' which was a term coined at the end of the eighteenth century to deride the efforts of assimilation made by the Normans in the twelfth century. This turn of phrase is also employed against members of the Irish community in North America as though being more Irish is less than being a kind of Irish that requires no augmentation, supplementation or diminution of any kind. The introductory vignette to Chapter 1 was an attempt to interrogate this phenomenon by examining the Blarney Stone. After one Irish class, Niels and I decided to go for lunch in a student canteen and I had the opportunity to ask him whether he thought of himself as being Irish:

Well, no- Not because I don't want to. I don't think people see or would let it be that way. I am... I suppose I am a hibernophile who is interested in the language. I was even interviewed once for TV by TG4²⁰ for a programme. They thought, like you do I think, that a non-Irish Irish speaker

is a rare commodity indeed. I mean I speak more Irish than most Irish [people] but that doesn't enter into it somehow. (Niels)

It was possible to observe the emission of pride as a result of passing and acknowledgement; on 1 March 2014, I was once again invited to celebrate the official opening of 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' in Brussels. I was with Catalin and Claire as the ambassador extended his thanks to everyone in the audience for the efforts made throughout the year to keep Irish alive, 'as a living language'; furthermore, and for the first time, he acknowledged the non-native Irish speakers in Belgium and at that very event who had gone to great lengths to give Irish their support. Claire was delighted:

I think that was the first time, or maybe I didn't hear it last time, but I think that was the first time they've ever thanked people like me and Catalin. I have to tell you that I've always felt like a kind of spy at these things. They usually address just Irish people, like there're only Irish people here and that the only people who are interested in Irish are the Irish. I'm really glad they mentioned that. (Claire)

Claire felt as though the limits of the language had become something more than an ethnic marker and that, because it now included her, was something about which she could be proud.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It can be claimed that what had occurred was that Catalin, and many others like him, came to occupy the same discursive space, or more accurately the same linguistic habitus (Bourdieu 1993: 78–90) that the Irish diaspora in Belgium also occupied. Many people feel pride at having been 'invited into the fold', while others remain sceptical as to this possibility, as in the testimony of Niels. Others still, where they see Irishness expressed lexically as something resembling a claim to belonging, feel the overwhelming need to intervene and to authenticate it, either so that the person who has made the infraction of (mis)attribution knows or in the design of a clear-cut, yes/no model which I completely reject on the basis of the findings examined in this chapter. At this point, it might be good to revisit an age-old bromide by Ruth Benedict that is common in anthropology that the very task of anthropology is to 'make the world safe for human difference'.²¹

Catalin's narrative can also be enlightening to the anthropology of Ireland, or anthropology Ireland (Wilson and Donnan 2006) exactly because, not in spite of the fact that he himself is not Irish. It might be instructive to recall Taylor's (1996) pronouncement:

In short, we need to ask not what (anthropology, ed.) theory can do for Ireland, but what Ireland can do for theory. (Taylor 1996: 225)

The risk that is run in separating the inauthentic from the authentic, in demystifying difference and making it accountable to the same, is one which is remote to anthropology. In critiquing Baudrillard, it has been possible to observe that only a postmodernism that does not rely on the argumentative formulae of its forebears (structuralist critiques) can account for phenomena that occur in that age (i.e. the postmodern present). The idea or desire for a litmus test, or a sheer negation of a person's claim to Irishness, arises from a perceived inauthenticity which reduces the speaker to a position of an illusory or fabricated misunderstanding of themselves. This is perhaps offered as a corrective, but in reality can incur dejection. The reduction of any narrative to a simulated, false consciousness brings about feelings of dejection; this is akin to the example outlined previously of the perceived inauthenticity of a good purchased at a stall in China being necessarily linked to the consumer having been duped somehow. The conflation of the simulated to the same brings about the possibility of acceptance, new relations to Irishness being made possible and can imbue the narrator with a kind of pride. What is required is the valourisation and further examination of what is a seemingly oxymoronic term. The non-Irish and Irish-speaking community can be viewed as having constructed something new for themselves.

The anthropologists examined in this chapter (Bruner 1994; Jackson 2008; Craciun 2012; Plasquy 2012) have managed to nuance the social fields examined, such that a space becomes available in which questions about simulacra, simulation and authenticity can be posited anew. For my part, I have submitted Catalin's narrative which takes place against the backdrop of a diaspora which, in the UK at least, is preoccupied with questions of belonging by way of the perceived authenticity of their claim to a solitary Irishness. Catalin, and others like him, can invite us to ruminate on the topic of the limits of Irishness. It is my belief that they hope that we can encounter strains of Irishness elsewhere that defy our reductive gaze, undercut the idea that there is a monopoly on Irishness

and that we acknowledge that other Irishnesses that are simulated in our presence, and which attempt to defy the efforts of the reductive gaze, seek to carve out a space which is altogether different.

NOTES

1. This work has been partially published as: O' Dubhghaill, S. (2014) 'It's fake—I mean it sounds the same, but it's fake': Plasticity, simulation and passing through the Irish Language in Belgium. *Irish Journal of Anthropology*, 17(1), 46–51, and which won the 'Postgraduate Essay Prize' for the year 2013. The present chapter is an extended version of the same article.
2. This and all translations are the author's own and are based on field notes which were written-up promptly after the sentences were uttered.
3. Lagavulin is a malt Whisky made on the Island of Islay, Scotland. Even without being a connoisseur, I could tell that the bottle was expensive.
4. Catalin had been taught how to speak Irish in a Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking region) in Glen Colmcille, Donegal in the North of Ireland.
5. A further exploration of the notion of 'meaningful difference' is espoused in De Saussure's 'Course in General Linguistics' (1959), pp. 81–88 and is foundational with respect to the structuralist movement which Derrida's work (1967) is said to have brought an end to. 'Meaningful difference' remains a useful criterion for analysis in studies of value however (see Graeber 2001; Carrier 2005: 439–454).
6. The object of his criticism here can be said to be Levi-Strauss's or Mary Douglas's thought and not, say, Roman Jakobson or Roland Barthes.
7. For a broader examination of this phenomenon, see O' Dubhghaill (2012).
8. A full assessment of Derrida's contribution to the humanities as a whole is detailed in Cohen (2001).
9. Neo-Platonism is thought to be any school of philosophy that takes Plato's notions of ideas and forms as its core, but which offers a radically different interpretation; thought to have begun in Plotinus Enneads (Plotinus 1966), Neo-Platonism was at its most popular during the Renaissance, see Cassirer et al. (1948).
10. Foucault reminds us in the *Order of Things* that the temptation to employ analogies is both a finite affair (it will never be tied to anything beyond the realm in which the analogies are drawn) and is indicative of classical thought (Foucault 2002 [1966]: 19–49). For an excellent critique of the use of analogy in anthropology, see Jackson (1989).
11. This is observed in the section after the following one in which passing, in the instance of the second generation of Irish people in the UK, would often incur a label of plastic.

12. For an examination of this phenomenon in the field of couchsurfing, see Steylaerts and O' Dubhghaill (2012).
13. As recently as 2015, there was a back and forth about exactly how common these signs were. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/28/no-reason-to-doubt-no-irish-no-blacks-signs>. This is also examined in Walter et al. (2002).
14. I am aware here that Paddy, to connote a person of Irish provenance generally has a male connotation, as discussed in Hickman and Walter (1995) I employ it here to connote both sexes; the connotation of plasticity as fraudulence is here what is meant to be emphasised.
15. The interplay in the construction of the meaning of Irish society has been investigated in the introduction with reference to the work of Wulff (2007).
16. These deficiencies are well-noted and even made headlines, which were more or less variations on the theme of: all a broad permutation 'Lack of language skills hurts our employment chance' Published 15 October 2013 and written by Sarah McCabe. The piece also drew attention to the alarming figure that while half of all students in the EU study two or more languages among Irish students that figure is closer to 8%.
17. House MD was a serialised medical drama which ran from 2004 to 2012 and which relied quite heavily on complicated medical-jargon for the purposes of storytelling.
18. The Irish classes referred to here have been examined at length in Chapter 4.
19. Fine Gael is Ireland's centre-right political party and the young Fine Gael is the sub-branch of the political party which attempt to activate the youth vote. Their goal is to promote Ireland and to foster ties among Brussels-based Eurocrats. In keeping with a 'young' incarnation of a bigger political party, their web presence seems to be restricted to Facebook; see <https://www.facebook.com/yfginternational>. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a deliberate effort was not undertaken to contact their branch in an effort to ascertain a more direct political engagement between Europe and Ireland. This is an initiative I believe that I achieved by examining European Movement International.
20. TG4 is one of four terrestrial channels in Ireland. Founded in 1996, its aim is to broadcast programming that is in the Irish language.
21. Sourcing this quote has been a source of some consternation. It appears to be an approximation of a couple of different books by Benedict. See <https://peabody.andover.edu/2017/01/14/ruth-benedict-and-the-purpose-of-anthropology/>. Accessed 17 December 2018.

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CHAPTER 6

Imagined Belonging and the Irish Diaspora

This final chapter is an attempt to tie together some of this work's loose ends; it does so by connecting all of the issues examined previously, such as community, identity, proximity, history, Irishness and otherness, and how we imagine belonging.¹ Given this aim, this chapter is slightly broader in scope than Belgium or even Europe. Instead, the concept of imaginaries is employed in order to provide a frame to guide how perceptions of Irishness are reimagined and staged for (global) consumption and what the performance of this identity communicates.

This chapter also aims to put paid to the examination provided at the very outset of this work, namely to attempt to better understand how members of the Irish diaspora relate to their homeland, and what exactly distinguishes a diaspora from an Irish community abroad. While this topic has been touched upon in the previous chapter, with respect to Irish immigrants to the UK, this present chapter attempts to take a further flung view of the mechanics of the diaspora. By way of conclusion, we return to the most commonly imagined expression of Irishness in Belgium in recent years, McDonagh's *In Bruges* (2008) and what it tells us about how both Belgium is imagined and how Irishness encounters that imaginary.

Prior to dipping our toes in the conceptual field of imaginaries, and how they can help us to approximate how diaspora belonging works though, it might be helpful to first provide an illustrative vignette of the phenomenon writ small. This will be achieved by examining 'The Gathering'. This event was a year-long series of informally organised and

grassroots-led events held throughout Ireland, under the stewardship of the Irish government's tourism arm, 'Fáilte Ireland'.² The idea was to arrange as many trips to Ireland as possible, by as many members of the worldwide diaspora as possible. The event's timing, throughout 2013, coincided perfectly with a time at which I had been struggling with questions of Irishness, how we might think of a community abroad (as well as worldwide) and the lines along which we might discern difference between Irish people at home and abroad. The event seems to have been an immense success, some criticism notwithstanding, with over 5000 events held, between 250,000 and 275,000 visitors and an estimated revenue of €170 million (Miley 2014: 3).

The advertising employed in the promotion of the Gathering generally attempted to capitulate a commonality, both in space and time, between members of the diaspora and those who remained in Ireland. Employing the language of our second chapter, what this involves is expanding the concept-metaphor's frame of reference to include a remote Irishness and an expansion of the word home. The most important feature to note in Fig. 6.1 is the collapsing of space (the kilometre distance appears, but in very small font). Distance is reimagined here in the representable and familiar manner of a signpost. Two minor points of interest are that both locations signposted are parts of larger anglophone diaspora hubs and that the central frame of reference (or the authenticating narrative) or focal point remains Ireland, from the soil of which the signpost rises.

Figure 6.2 attempts to expand the symbolic dimension of commonality by muddying notions of home somewhat.

My immediate question upon encountering the billboard above was who was excited to have whom home exactly. The photo displays a group of people who seem to be equally excited (more or less) to be in one another's company, and so the receiving party is difficult to discern from the welcomed one.

A clear image forms from the two figures though, and against the tourism-led initiative of the Gathering. What is conveyed in these two images, and others featured in the campaign for the gathering, is the incidental quality of space, time and affection. It does not matter that distance creates gaps between far-flung parts of the world if they can be overcome with one flight to Ireland. The same is true for the level of excitement expected from the receiving party in Ireland. The message being circulated, and it has certainly been a successful



Fig. 6.1 Dublin Airport signpost (Photo Author's own)

one, also reinforces certain aspects of a diaspora-oriented Irishness that has come up time and again in this work. For instance, the campaign was only for one year, so the excitement and receptivity with which Irish diaspora members are treated is conditional. Also, Ireland retains



Fig. 6.2 'Excited to get you home' billboard, Dublin Airport (Photo Author's own)

the authenticating position from which diaspora viewpoints can be validated; whereas emergent strains of Irishness come into being (Irish-American, Irish-Argentine or any such combination of Irish followed by a hyphen and another ethnic group's name), these advertisements suggest that Ireland retains a monopoly over the identity. The problematic assertion that Ireland, as one's ancestral home, *can* beckon one 'home' at all is something that has not gone unnoticed. It was for these reasons that the actor Gabriel Byrne and others have referred to the entire event as a 'cash grab'.³ Without wishing to get into the question of what the intention behind the event may have been, how prominent a role the Irish worldwide played in that year's biggest ever tourism initiative is difficult to overstate. This also leads us to questions, though, such as: when exactly the Irish diaspora was recognised as an entity in Ireland, how are they imagined by policy makers, and how has this changed? How does one prove one's diaspora credentials, as it were? Is it simply a matter of engaging with Irish tour operators on their terms and when they permit it? The chapter that follows poses these questions with a view to providing a frame of reference through which they might be

better understood, namely through the conceptual lens of the cultural imaginary (Strauss 2006). As evidence, a variety of media are examined to scrutinise what is being conveyed and imparted about Irishness abroad (and at ‘home’).

WHAT IS A DIASPORA?

One of the most prominent factors that determine belonging depends on how that belonging is imagined. To that end, it is difficult to overstate the importance of Anderson’s (1983) notion of ‘imagined communities’, in which members of a social group feel themselves to be akin to others who share the same territory, temporality and context, despite their never having met one another. This is the principle of diasporic belonging, writ large, as can be observed through the notion of scattering. Cohen and Kennedy also emphasise the link between one’s homeland proper and the conventional imagination thereof by members of the diaspora:

[Diasporas] are formed by the forcible or voluntary dispersion of peoples to a number of countries. They constitute a diaspora if they continue to evince a common concern for their ‘homeland’ (sometimes an imagined homeland) and come to share a common fate with their own people, wherever they happen to be. (Cohen and Kennedy 2000: 32)

While I have examined the characteristics of community elsewhere, and the self-perceptions that comprise it, this chapter approaches this issue from another angle by examining what imaginaries themselves are and how they work in our subjective and projected ascriptions of meaning.

How we imagine difference, consumption patterns and relate to one another interculturally can all be related back to the imaginary, defined as ‘socially shared and transmitted (both within and between cultures) representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices’ (Salazar 2011: 576). This chapter examines first how this concept has been employed in anthropology, as well as how it might be employed in critical, novel manners. The theoretical usefulness of imaginaries has been emphasised by many discrete disciplines acting in concert, from the aforementioned work by Anderson on the ‘imagined community’ (1983) to Lacan’s psychoanalytical breakdown of the ‘imaginary’

(1977 [1953]), and Castoriadis's sociological 'imaginary society' (1987 [1975]). What is consistent in their analyses generally is that the imaginary is a binding concept, one which is anything other than fictive (Jenkins 2002) and through which the interpretation of social phenomena and interaction is possible and allows for novel insights to be generated. Another concern is the moment at which imagined features of a particular group become concretised into webs of stereotypy in which people must actively fight against the prejudicial imaginaries that are thrust upon them or proscribed.⁴

The twenty-first century has already witnessed a resurgence of interest in the topic of the imaginary, specifically in the role played in how culturally significant imaginings become manifested in migration (Smith 2006), lifestyle migration (Benson 2012) and in expatriation with respect to transnational 'homing' practices (Walsh 2006). This has given rise to other examinations in which the imaginary has become unbound from political communities and which has generated insights into tourism encounters (Salazar and Graburn 2014), social modernity (Taylor 2004) and transnational mobility (Salazar 2011) more generally.

What remains under-investigated, though, in perusing the current literature surrounding notions concerning imaginaries, is their distinctively cultural component. This chapter examines imaginaries through the provision of the example of diasporic belonging before proceeding to furnish examples from film and short clips produced that touch directly on the notion of alternative forms of Irish belonging. To that end, this chapter tries to reorient global diasporic images of Irishness.

DIASPORA AND RECEPTION ABROAD

This section examines the customary notions of emigration and diaspora from the perspective of the Irish. While much of the work has been concerned with questions of authenticity and legitimacy about Irish belonging, the sections that follow try to examine hibernophilia (once again, the love of all things Irish) specifically, and how this is expressed through consumer goods, advertisements and other media.

The desire to close the perceived gap between 'home' and residence in Europe can often manifest itself in the consumption of Irish fare or in the observation of specific events that are celebrated in Ireland while overseas. The compensation for a sense of felt 'rootlessness' often incurs

contests over whether the engagement in a specific form of culture, for want of a better word, is sincere or is simply a touristic engagement in an orchestrated display. Examples of ‘alien spectators’ attempting to commodify aspects of Irish life as it is lived are exemplified in the work of Quinn (2001) who analyses the manner in which ‘traditional’ crafts have become transformed into palatable tourist fare. Quinn details her ethnographic experience among a small group of Irish speakers (an *Tapéis gael* or Irish tapestry) who are attempting to revive the craft of weaving as part of their purported heritage. The ethnographer details the manner in which, in anticipation of an upcoming event, a ‘frontstage’ that is intended for consumption by the tourist gaze is erected which bears little commonality with the group’s everyday workings and tasks. This presentification of cultural heritage, as though it were contemporaneous and in keeping with life as it is lived in the present age, causes proponents to become alienated from their own attempts to revive the lost heritage and induces, in one informant, the desire to emigrate and to start anew. In closing, Quinn writes:

[T]he reconfiguring of persons who seek to define themselves as cultural artefacts, and who subsequently become defined as such, means that they as well as the objects they create are susceptible of coming under the influence and power of continuing objective discourses [...] To colonizer, church and state in Ireland is now added tourist, the newest representer who, because s/he is solicited and approached, arrives with even more disingenuous acerbity. (Quinn 2001: 38)

The consumption of Irish-themed fare, though, is not simply done by tourists who arrive with the express intention of watching, while simultaneously objectifying the display. The desire to rediscover one’s roots is thought to be most rife among third and fourth generation Irish-Americans for whom St. Patrick’s Day is the single largest conveyance through which a collective assembly can join together and express pride in their identity (Rains 2006). This event is participated in by both the Irish and the non-Irish and is thought to imbue those in the audience with a kind of provisional and temporal licence over Irishness.⁵ This is oftentimes difficult given that their identity has been formed, not by having been born in Ireland, but has been mediated through simulations and other representations of that identity:

The negotiations of such Irish Americans' relationship to Ireland becomes one dominated by the concept of a home nation which is not only elsewhere, but which is not directly and personally remembered. It is this moment at which Ireland becomes, for the majority of the world's population who identify themselves as Irish, a home understood through the consumption of narrativised images- principally those of film and tourism- rather than first-hand memory or experience. (Rains 2006: 141)

Put otherwise, the connection that most individuals with Irish roots have is imaginary (not fictive, but imagined in the sense of it not having been experienced in an unmediated way). The imagined component of diaspora generally, and of the Irish diaspora specifically, is key to understanding why individuals who feel a sincere connection to Ireland cannot be simply derided as somehow having been conned, or worse as having insincere motives or the desire to cheapen the identity in some way.

I am not alone in viewing the importance of connection to Ireland as having an imagined component. One example given of how an imagined community can be as small-scale as an expatriate-oriented football club has been proffered by Nagy et al. (2013). They write about *FC Irlande*, one such expat football club based in Brussels, in which four of my informants for this work were closely involved. Their position draws from Bauman's observation (2000) that when one community fades from memory or view, such as through acts of mobility, a community is thought to have become dissolved and is replaced with the desire to create or align oneself with a new community:

[T]he club features an "imagined" community since what brings it together is an imagined Irishness. But the practices around this Irishness are very real, and here we do not only refer to football; the carcass of a "traditional" Irish community has been adapted to the reality of today's Brussels and has taken the shape of a Cocoon Community. For many of the club's members, Brussels in general and FC Irlande remain the places that most closely resemble the possibility of a community. (Nagy et al. 2013)

What emerges from this analysis is that the sincerity of the involvement, as well as the time commitment involved, prevent the levelling of criticisms against the club's Irish character as being 'imagined' in the sense of fictive. Without wishing to belabour the point, given the attention paid to the notion of community previously, cocoon communities can capture

or generate new becomings and new expressions of Irishness, but their intention is to approximate something that has been lost, not to invent or spur its members to encounter difference more fully.

In examining the literature on the topic of the Irish diaspora, I found a statement by the former President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, made at the opening of *Changing States: Contemporary Irish Art & Francis Bacon's Studio*. This was an exhibit launched on the 27 February 2013 as part of Ireland's third presidency of the Council of the European Union. Van Rompuy made an interesting observation:

In these contemporary reflections on 'changing states' of affairs there's an unmistakable continuity with the Irish tradition. Part of what it means to be Irish is to be a foreigner. More Irish live abroad than in their country. Being scattered all over the world in an extensive diaspora has profoundly affected and shaped their way of thinking. (Cappock 2013: 5)

The manner in which thinking about belonging changes through processes of emigration, which gives rise to continuity rather than discontinuity, has hitherto been unexamined among the Irish community/diaspora in Belgium, with the exception of the vignette provided in the preface to this chapter.

The notion of the 'Irish diaspora' is one of a recent composition, rather than referring to them as an Irish community abroad in the strictest sense and whose complexities have been examined in Chapter 1, and burst onto the scene and into the popular lexicon after a speech given by former President of Ireland Mary Robinson in 1998. Robinson highlighted a particular work by Irish poet Eavan Boland, which had been written a decade previously, concerning the treatment of members of the diaspora by those who remained at home:

Like oil lamps we put them out the back, of our houses, of our minds. We had lights better than, newer than and then a time came, this time and now we need them. (Boland 2012)

In the context of the Gathering, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this statement is indeed prescient; rather than renewing an invitation to return 'home' to reconnect, the desire for tourism as an economic necessity remains an undercurrent, or why Ireland 'needs them'. Mary Robinson was attempting to redirect attention to the swathe

of Irish people abroad who had been consigned to elsewhere from the national consciousness and is thought to have been the driving force behind more attention being paid to the Irish diaspora.

This became enshrined in law that same year, given that article two of the Irish Constitution had to be rewritten in the light of the 'Good Friday agreement'; the original iteration reads simply that: 'The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas'. The primacy of the territory in the composition of the citizen is concisely stated and is such that the diaspora can no longer identify closely with a citizenry, the limits of belonging of which do not extend overseas. This was changed in 1998 to acknowledge the special relationship that Ireland has with its overseas diaspora and currently reads:

It is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish Nation. That is also the entitlement of all persons otherwise qualified in accordance with law to be citizens of Ireland. Furthermore, the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage. (Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution 2002)

The concept of diaspora, as it applies to the manner in which the Irish government has instrumentalised the diaspora and how their special affinity, which might be framed as a 'we-consciousness', is predicated on inter-ethnic acknowledgement. However, in the graduated acknowledgement of citizens versus denizens we might observe that there remains a central identity which exogenously cherishes those who are, and remain, outside of Ireland.⁶

Turning to the Irish diaspora globally, the figures present something of a different story and which were recently released as part of 'The Gathering'.⁷ The figures released posit the presence of an Irish, global diasporic community who are invited to return to Ireland to get in touch with their 'roots'. What is being capitalised upon is that the diaspora, whose cherishment is enshrined in the constitution, can return to Ireland and whose presence is thought to be very beneficial in the context of economic crisis.

What can be observed immediately is a matter alluded to previously, specifically of the Anglophone preference in migration over multilingual migration. The figure postulated here for those individuals in Belgium

who identify themselves as Irish, or possibly as having a special affinity with the people of Ireland, is estimated to be 400,000. This figure, as we have observed, far exceeds any currently on record, but that does not make it a false one. The Irish diaspora cannot be thought of in terms of strictly delineated patterns of continuity and which would be extremely difficult if not impossible to do given their internal differences (see, Doyle 1999). Instead, we might extrapolate that the diaspora, in having an effect on the region in which they reside, changes the subjective orientations of those they encounter as well as undergoing change themselves. Instead of capitulating this alteration in the composition of the diaspora as something that is to its detriment, i.e. that it is losing something integral to itself, we are reminded in Hall (1990) that this is a necessary component of those elements of exposure to other cultures which lead to identities being reconstructed anew:

The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (Hall 1990: 235)

This being borne in mind, one of the primary sites in which this field-work takes place has been within the 'Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe' which attempts to closely ally the Irish-Belgian contingent of the European Diaspora with European identity more generally in order to bring a more European-focussed, and oriented, disposition into existence (Meyvis 2000). This effort of conjoining the Irish with 'Europe', and against Hall's contention, is often thought to be something of a diminution or dilution of the Irish and which is thought to have a similar effect to migration.

This very same concern is commonly represented either to tourists or others that require a supplementation of knowledge by persons wishing to commodify goods which are in danger of being in short supply. This, thereby, increases the demand for a product that is in ever-decreasing amounts—subject as it is to an internal, always-already process of ongoing dilution which is seldom, if ever, put across as positive diversification. A clear example of this is observable in a series of popular photographic works entitled *Vanishing Ireland*:

I believe the images herein are a romantic view of an Ireland rapidly vanishing into the 21st century. American-style subdivisions have started to dot the landscape, new cars abound, and the winding, narrow country lanes are being replaced by Motorways. Almost nothing is sacred any longer. Even some of the most historically and culturally significant sites, such as The Hill of Tara, are being threatened by the new super highways [...] On one of my last trips to Ireland, I was astounded by the transformation and prosperity of the country. I remarked to a shopkeeper how different things seemed compared to just three years before. She agreed that things were indeed better, but was quick to note that she felt they were losing something special. They were becoming more European. They were losing their 'Irishness'. (Niemann 2013)

Rather than concerning myself with authenticating one postulation of legitimacy over another, whether Europeaness is thought to be damaging to Irishness or vice versa, it is my intention solely to restate that rather than simply succumbing to overseas influences, Ireland is simply becoming something that is less well-recognised or less frequently imagined. The loss of place's uniqueness is an imaginary concern and no amount of exposure to European or global influences would serve to necessitate the loss of Irishness, only a particular strain thereof.

There are other commentators, writing on the topic of European integration, who have demonstrated that one's imagination of Ireland depends less on the place itself, and depends more on the successful proliferation of particular narrative take on that nation. Abeles et al. (1993) remark that:

Irish identity was constructed, from the nineteenth century onwards, in conceptual opposition to England and Britain. Where Britain was rational, Ireland was emotional. Where Britain came to represent imperial, industrial rationality, Ireland became a primitive, backward and, by the same token, mystical, rural and festive authenticity. This imagery has, through tourism, become an important part of Ireland's economy. (Abeles et al. 1993: 48)

Ireland, having been the product of English alterity exclusively, overlooks the European dimension and consigns Ireland once more to a postcolonial position from which it cannot hope to lay claims to a certain degree of 'Europeaness'. This was inscribed in various discourses surrounding Ireland's accession to the European Union and which drew upon bygone notions of backwardness, economic dependency and which became

transformed over time to occupying a more enviable position on the world stage. It is for this reason that we must consider Ireland as being something which is not an entity which, had it not manifested itself, would have been imagined into existence by the English.⁸ The influence of comparative imaginaries cannot be overlooked either, and perhaps one's view on change, or of becoming, depends more on the subject's perception or imagining of the good or of the negative outcomes of progress and has less to do with the empirical phenomenon of difference over time.

The section that follows provides a working example of this imaginary at work in advertising. The ad, aimed at Irish audiences, is for a beer and takes the notion of an immediate display of Irishness as its jumping-off point. Despite running for only a little over 40s, the ad touches on issues ranging from the spontaneous performance of Irishness (through roguery and misusing the language) in non-European contexts, the decline of the Irish language, inauthenticity, simulation and improvisation.

THE USE OF IRISH AT HOME AND ABROAD: 'DO SOMETHING IRISH!'

The advertisement I will examine concerns the attempt made by Irish tourists to pass off their lack-lustre Irish as something poetic, beautiful and rhapsodising. The advertisement is notable primarily because it plays out in almost the exact opposite manner than *Yu Ming is ainm dom*, an Irish language-related film analysed further below. The advert begins with two Irish men entering a nightclub in Rio de Janeiro. By asking for their order in English, with an Irish lilt, they are revealed to be non-locals and the barman asks where they are from. The pair answer that they are from Ireland and the barman immediately puts them to the test by instructing them to do 'something Irish'. Before long, the attentions of the whole bar are cast upon them as the publican pleads, somewhat aggressively, with them to perform an array of stereotypically Irish things; someone yells: What about Irish singing? A woman who closes in on the trio speaks in a monotone in the declarative tense: 'Dance!' What follows is a ploy by the central character to perform his Irishness; it seems impossible to dance or to sing without running the risk of making a spectacle of one's self and so the trio decide to pick another option that

is less universal. They speak Irish and remark: 'An bhfuil cead agam dul go dtí an leithreas?' (Transl. Can I go to the toilet?) He receives a confused look from the barman.

Very quickly, and to ease the tension, another man interjects that he is reciting an Irish poem. He continues by speaking a series of words that are some of the most basic tenets of the Irish language: 'Agus madra rua. Is maith liom cáca milis. Agus Sharon Ní Bheoláin! Tá geansaí orm. Tá scamall sa spéir. Tabhair dom an chaca milis!' (Fox, I like cake and Sharon Ní Bheoláin [an Irish news anchor]. I am wearing a jumper. There are clouds in the sky. Give me the delicious cake.) Having succeeded, by way of a series of nonsense words, the trio congratulate themselves on having replicated a sufficiently alien-sounding language, by way of recitation, and are applauded by all and sundry. The final shot is of one man who seems to have become splintered from the group, reciting more verses of the 'poem' to a woman; 'Ciúnas bóthar cailín bainne', he whispers the translation of which is roughly: 'Quiet, road, girl, milk'.

This advertisement is alluded to by Kelly-Holmes (2010) in which it is contrasted against older, Irish language-based ads. What emerges, it is argued, is that the Carlsberg ad:

[F]eatured three young Irish men on holidays in Rio de Janeiro and the message of the ad [is, ed.] that speaking Irish makes one attractive in international tourist destinations. (Kelly-Holmes 2010: 76)

Curiously, though, the calibre of spoken Irish goes unquestioned and what is interesting is the clear tie between Irishness and desirability. Another commentator, on an Irish-language interest blog who goes by the name of An 'Spailpín fánach' (or 'The wandering day-labourer'), inverts this interpretation by claiming that the ad has more to do with a kind of cultural condescension:

[T]hat ad sums up everything the nation, as a whole, thinks about the first language right now. We like the idea of Irish, the idea of it being there, but it has no semantic meaning for us. It means nothing. Such words we have are only those we remember from school, in brief incoherent snatches. We like the language, in the same way we like that old fool of a dog that always chases parked cars, but fundamentally it's a joke, not something to be taken seriously. "Ciúnas bóthar cailín bainne." "Quiet road girl milk."

Gibberish. We think Irish is gibberish, and its only purpose is to give us another reason to look down on foreigners, something we love doing all the time.⁹

Further reinforcement of the element of passing oneself off as being able to speak Irish is also something which is thought to derive a lot of pleasure in the spectator; this is evidenced by the claim that the type of humour employed in this ad was found to be among the most appealing to youth, according to youth research into alcohol and advertising (Hope 2009) in which the 'Irish Language Ad', created by London-based advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, is thought to typify the most desirable style of behaviour.

While pride can be elicited by those who attempt to speak the language and pass, the dynamic cuts both ways which means that pretending to speak a language and succeeding by way of gibberish is also something that is imagined and transmitted as something commendable. This notion serves to muddy the waters of authenticating procedures by highlighting the appropriability of the language for the purposes of identification by anyone, especially given the infrequency with which it is spoken. Proficiency in the language is no longer required and while the impression/semblance of the Irish language remains, in some fashion, the stronger representative tie (in this case a kind of fluency) is lost. This occurs, as we have seen, from within and from without.

At the same, though, it is possible to find other examples in popular media that display alternative imaginaries of the acquisition of the Irish language, and how this calls various claims to Irishness and authenticity into question. The second example, to which I wish to turn, tells the opposite story to the advertisement and involves someone arriving from overseas to Ireland, but who is confronted with the difficulty of having the ability to speak Irish, but no one to understand it.

YU MING IS AINM DOM: IMAGINING THE IRISH LANGUAGE AT 'HOME'

Yu Ming is ainm dom (2003) is a short film that was written and directed by Daniel O' Hara in which a young Chinese man becomes bored of his humdrum situation as a shop assistant and sets his sights on globetrotting. While in a local library, our main character, Yu, spins a globe and

pressing his finger on a random point, in order that the globe might stop and tell him where his destiny lies, he lands on the island of Ireland. He sets about reading up on the fabled Irish people and reads that Irish is the first language of Ireland, as enshrined in its constitution. We see Yu practising the phonetics, acquiring the ability to say his own name (a sentence from which the title derives its meaning, Yu Ming is my name) and we observe Yu acting out an often-parodied scene from Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1978).

After Yu deems himself to possess the language skills adequate to make himself understood and to find work, he travels to Ireland. Yu travels to Ireland safely and is able to navigate Ireland easily at first, given that he recognises the Irish-language signposts in certain areas. The reason for the provision of Irish, first, and then its English counterpart second is a statutory requirement; this is outlined in a report by the Irish Department of Transportation's 'Traffic signs manual', section 1.1.48 in which we observe that:

It is a statutory requirement that place names on information signs be in both Irish and English, except: For names of destinations in Gaeltacht areas, where the names of places in such areas are in Irish only; and where the spelling of a place name is similar in both languages, in which case only the Irish form of the name should be shown. (DoT 2010: 1¹⁰)

Yu navigates his way, in this manner, into the centre of Dublin city, only now his requirement of lodgings means that he will have to interact with a hotelier; he arrives at the Isaac Butt hostel, a recognisable Dublin landmark, and presents himself to the attendant. The man acknowledges him, in a heavy Australian accent, by stating: 'G'day! How was your flight?' Yu is completely baffled by this and supplicates himself by trying to speak slowly, ashamed of his ostensibly mediocre grasp of the Irish language. Before too long, we see Yu in a situation much akin to that in which we first found him, dejected and alone. Here we observe the confrontation of Irishness as a commodity to the situation of an 'alien' with the desire to speak Irish incurring dejection.

The penultimate scene shows Yu arriving into a pub whereupon he pleads with the barman to allow him to work there, even though he only speaks Irish to a seemingly substandard level. The barman is replete with platitudes for Yu, while also trying to divine this man's will, and he is the first character we meet who is Irish, but who does not understand

the language being spoken to him. ‘Guinness? It’s good! It’s Oir-ish’, the barman enquires as he gesticulates in a flamboyant way. Before too long, we see an older man who recognises that Irish is being spoken and invites Yu, in fluent Irish, to sit with him. ‘Suí síos a mhac, agus cheannóidh mé deoch dhuit!’ (Sit down young man and I will buy you a drink). The stranger welcomes Yu Ming and sets about asking him a few questions, the first of which is where he is from; Yu responds that he arrived only the previous day from China. The older man is positively baffled and the incredulity on his face is evident as he asks rhetorically: ‘Agus labhríonn tú *Gaeilge*?’ (And you speak *Irish*?) Yu confides that he does, but that he regrets the decision to learn it, given the fact that no one he has met to that point has been able to understand him. The older man implores the barman, Seán, to fetch him two pints as he delves further into the uncanny curiosity of the situation at hand. This particular situation is eerily similar to the bafflement I originally expressed to non-Irish Irish speakers; this is what led to my devoting an entire chapter to that topic. The older man goes on to say that it was not the standard of his Irish that was his problem: ‘Labhríonn tusa *Gaeilge* níos fear nó an chuid is mó daoine sa tír seo’ (‘You speak Irish better than most of the people in this country’). Yu is upset to hear that Irish people speak English, ‘from England’, and retorts that he saw Irish on signs to which the old man retorts, ‘Bhuel, tá an teanga ann ach ní labhríotar í seachas amháin I gcúpla ceantair in Éireann’ (Well, the language is *there*, but it isn’t spoken, except only in a couple of regions). This conversation draws to a close as the barman wonders aloud, to a colleague, whether he knew that ‘aul Paddy’ could speak Chinese; the line is an intentional barb at the lack of awareness of the inner workings of the Irish language and it is one that receives a hearty laugh on every single occasion on which the film is shown.

The film closes with a smash cut to a white van driving at speed past a sign that reads simply ‘An Gaeltacht’ (The Gaeltacht). The van pulls up to a small tavern and a few tourists make their way indoors. Yu Ming, now cheerfully working behind the bar, approaches and welcomes them to Connemara and asks: ‘Conas atá sibh?’ (Regional approximation meaning: How are ye?¹¹)

Yu Ming is ainm dom serves the function of showing an Ireland that is porous, in a sense, and which endorses the possibility of authentic transnational ingratiation in Ireland; in this way, it is the opposite of the advertisement set in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It shows a kind of

hibernophilia that blends seamlessly, eventually, into the Irish landscape in which it finds itself. Despite the frustrations encountered by Yu in the beginning, in the booming, anonymous metropolis of Dublin, he eventually finds himself to feel at home in the sunny West of Ireland and becomes something of an authority figure. He has symbolically replaced the publican he encountered in Dublin who, only in the previous scene, attempted to reduce Yu's unintelligibility and possible reason for his arrival at the bar that day as wanting to consume something stereotypically 'Irish'. In the end, Yu becomes the dispensary for stereotypically Irish fare, re-embedding himself in a context in which he is no longer an alien and in a country which is no longer alien to him.

In the decade since its release, Yu's plight might be read as something more prophetic; in 2013, the Irish Language Commissioner released a report, for use in schools, entitled: *Language Rights: A Resource for Teachers* features 'Yu Ming is ainm dom' prominently as a resource with which students can become familiar:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of language so as to get the full picture or story.
- The challenges that arise when people don't understand the primary language of the country. (An Coimisinéir Teanga 2013: 21)¹²

Yu's situation of isolation was one which took on an even more polemical and political slant recently when, in 2012, the Commissioner for the Irish language reported that a man had been pulled over by the police, for a matter relating to a traffic infraction, and when he spoke to the policeman in question in Irish he was arrested, handcuffed and detained until an Irish-language interpreter could be located.¹³ He was detained after he spoke to the member of the Gardaí in Irish, a right which is in compliance with the Official Languages Act 2003.¹⁴ This event led the Coimisinéir na Teanga (Irish language Commissioner) to add a subtitle to their annual report of 2013 which read: 'Ní Sárbhláin a bhí 2012' (Not a great year was 2012, transl.)

It emerged during the investigation that the Gardaí involved appeared to suggest that those who wished to conduct their business through Irish should be treated in the same way as "foreign nationals"; that concept came into use regularly in the discourse surrounding this matter. (2013: 39)

The equation of Irish people with foreign people is Yu Ming's story told in reverse and which serves as an excellent entry point into examining the linguistic limits of an identity which no longer has a hold over the popular imagination. Our final vignette of this chapter shows how identity is portrayed and constructed in a specifically Belgian example, by looking to the north of Belgium to *In Bruges* (2008).

By turning our attention to another much more influential film, albeit a much longer one, we can see how our linguistic expressions are modified in the consumption of much more popular fare. The encountering of place 'ahead of time' also allows Irish consumers to render Belgium as a known space though the invocation of a symbolic set of meanings with which Bruges itself has become associated. These are largely negative ones, though, and stand in clear contrast to tourism imaginaries that employ exoticism, Orientalism or an anachronistic timeframe to contrast with the tourists' home contexts.¹⁵

THE IMAGINARIES OF BRUGES AND *IN BRUGES*

This section aims to provide an overview of the composition of imaginaries, how we might think of them as mediating, aiding or predicating certain forms of mobility and the manner through which they contextualise and ground mobility. I begin by providing an overview of how visual media and imaginaries coalesce in rendering a space 'known'—but not in a conventional sense—or as receptive to Irish tourists, a receptivity which does not have to be based around positive sentiments. This examination will be buttressed with reference to a popular visual intermediary in the film 'In Bruges' (2008) Dir. Martin McDonagh.

Lines from *In Bruges* are a common phenomenon in Belgium, and the reduction of all of Belgium to Bruges, for the purposes of extrapolating about its character, is similar to the manner in which Brussels is conflated with Europe. For the purposes of this section, the particular tack taken is one that is informed by the commentary provided by Leite (2014) on how imaginaries can motivate encounters:

[T]he concept of imaginaries rests on the existence of ideas, beliefs, interpretive schema and imaginings that are potentially shared by large populations but, being products of the human mind, cannot be seen other than in their materialisations or in the forms of encounter and interactions they motivate. (Leite 2014: 262)

The encounters and interactions motivated by the film are evident. The place, on the basis of the film, is impugned to be a 'shithole'. The first distinction I wish to make is that characterising places as shitholes, while in dialogue with another character and in a facetious manner, is something different entirely to the characterisation made by President Donald Trump of 'shithole countries'.¹⁶ Conversations with informants who had guests over to visit them would remark on the felt-requirement to go to Bruges. Conversations would generally proceed in the following fashion: A: 'Why visit Bruges?' B: 'Because it's a shithole' A: 'Why is Bruges a shithole?' B: 'Because "In Bruges" says it's a shithole'. Another encounter that *In Bruges* motivated was a considerable boom in tourism to Flanders from Ireland (15–45% in 2009, Toerisme Vlaanderen 2012, 2014). The spike in tourism is fascinating, particularly with respect to the fact that film, in its dialogue at least, strongly conveys the negative aspects of Bruges. Imaginaries can become laden with both negative and positive associations, as we have seen, and it is interesting to see a Flemish score-settling of sorts occur by way of response. The Flemish-language film 'Broer' (2016, Dir. Geoffrey Enthoven) tries to invert the gaze somewhat by transplanting Flemish characters to Bantry Bay, Co. Cork, Ireland. The manner in which this analogical architecture renders Bruges a known space, by way of an imaginary connection, is troubled slightly by a little-known rewrite to the script, a topic examined in the subsequent paragraph.

Walking around Bruges, particularly by the bell-tower near which much of the film takes place, during the summertime incurs the risk of overhearing lines delivered in the film being delivered verbatim. The filmography displays a particularly beautiful image of Bruges, which is in stark contrast to the scathing characterisation given to the place by Ray, played by Colin Farrell. On this topic, one curiosity I wish to draw attention to here is that the two lead characters of *In Bruges* were originally supposed to have been born in London, not Ireland.¹⁷

Ken: Coming up?

Ray: What's up there?

Ken: The view.

Ray: The view of what? The view of down here? I can see that from down here.

Ken: Ray, you are about the worst tourist in the whole world.

Ray: Ken, I grew up in Dublin. I love Dublin. If I grew up on a farm, and was retarded, Bruges might impress me but I didn't, so it doesn't (2008: 22)

Two elements I wish to tease out of this sentiment are Ray's obvious disdain for the touristic encounter with otherness and the fact that he loves Dublin. The difficulty with the latter point and particularly with the last-minute background change is that Bruges and Dublin have a great deal in common, particularly given that they are both Medieval cities.

I wish to close this examination by highlighting how I have attempted to transmit a brief overview of how *In Bruges* and Bruges itself are imagined through visual media, how that imaginary is represented as an 'as though' shithole, while maintaining the status of a must-see touristic venue; this must-see quality can be observed in the up-spike in tourism to Flanders in the period immediately following the film's release. My informant's understandings generally lead away from a negative opinion of Bruges, but instead to an 'as though' shithole-ness, which renders it familiar, pre-hewn and available. This familiarisation with this imaginary is predicated by the film and reinforced and strengthened through acts of mobility. As we have seen in increased tourism, and which is clearly visible on Facebook and social media posts about Bruges (even a decade after the film's release), is that Bruges has a strong (arguably negative) connotation to the Irish community and diaspora more generally, but it allows an access point, a symbolic latching point that motivates journeys to Bruges. The imagined Bruges is confronted, time and again, but the characterisation retains the orientation of the source material from *In Bruges*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has taken on a topic introduced at the very outset of this work, that of the imaginary component of community. I have argued that community is constituted by an imagined sameness, viewpoint and perceived ethnic similarity ethnicity with those who live among us in our surroundings. While the first chapter interrogated community, before proceeding to what we mean by identity in the second chapter, this chapter has attempted to unravel the concept of the imaginary further. We have observed how imaginaries can be employed in the obliteration of distance and time, through the Gathering's advertisements, and how we might understand the kinds of encounters that these imaginaries motivate by employing an anthropological lens. This was followed by an examination of a variety of media that contain and postulate different messages about the Irish language, performing Irishness abroad,

the limits of claims to belonging, how we might want to visit a place we heard referred to as a shithole, and others.

The imaginary's role in constituting difference, or in ameliorating it at times, is and remains a profound one. While the vignettes selected in this chapter have been very different formally, the imagined intentions of an advertisement are very different to an edifying short film, there is a curious pole around which all of them revolve, namely differing conceptions of Irishness. The imagined situatedness of Irishness has also served as a vector through which issues of transnational belonging, linguistic identity, imagined expectations of places, and performing Irishness abroad in an insincere manner can be examined. The supplementary character of imagination allows us to both enter into dialogue with a broader range of cultural forms as well as invites us to rethink what is being portrayed. It was for this reason that a Belgium-specific example of an imaginary at work was chosen to close this section. Moreover, alongside the immediate conversational go-to's of 'European' belonging, and historical belonging in Leuven, is now added the conceptual-metaphorical and imagined encounter with Bruges.

NOTES

1. The issues will not be resolved completely, however, and instead we will be left with anthropological knots, in the sense meant by Green (2014).
2. This is transliterated as: Welcome Ireland or as Ireland of the welcomes.
3. 'Gabriel Byrne: The Gathering Ireland "seen as scam" by Irish Americans' <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20218856>. Accessed on 17 December 2018.
4. I have attempted to illustrate this in Fig. 5.1 previously.
5. For a comprehensive history of St. Patrick's Day festivities, which are documented in largelyAnglophone communities, see Cronin and Adair (2002).
6. This has led to an imaginary line being drawn and maintained in various discourses between 'real' and 'fake' or 'plastic' Irish people. This is further examined within the scope of the work presented in Chapter 5.
7. 'The Gathering' was a consolidated effort taken by many state bodies, Governmental departments and local development authorities, in co-operation with the two largest Tourism stakeholders 'Fáilte Ireland' and 'Tourism Ireland' to invite people to host and attend events organised and run in Ireland in the year 2013.

8. It is for this reason that Kilberd makes a claim similar to one made by Voltaire that: 'If Ireland had never existed, the English would have invented it' (Kilberd 1995: 9).
9. See: 'Quiet, Road, Milk, Girl' published 5 March 2008. The full article is available at: <http://spailpin.blogspot.be/2008/03/quiet-road-girl-milk-what-carlsberg-ad.html> and was last accessed on 8 October 2018.
10. The text of the traffic signs manual can be read in their entirety here: <http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/roads/english/traffic-signs-manual-2010/traffic-signs-manual-2010-chapter-1-introduction-and-sign-location.pdf>.
11. The Irish language has a specific form of the 'you-plural', which is translated from 'Sibh', and has been translated into English here as 'Ye'.
12. Interestingly, and in the same text, there is a strong emphasis placed on the celebration and observation of Europe Day (9 May) as well as the observation of the European Day of Languages (26 September) (Ibid.: 57).
13. The man was found to have infringed upon Section 107 of the Road Traffic Acts, 1961–2011.
14. A complete copy of the text of the act can be found here: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/32/enacted/en/html>.
15. On Orientalism, see Said (1978) and on tourism imaginaries more generally, see Salazar and Graburn (2014).
16. <http://time.com/5100481/donald-trump-shithole-countries-respond/>. Accessed on 20 November 2018.
17. <https://www.mentorless.com/2013/05/10/10-things-about-making-in-bruges-and-writer-director-martin-mcdonagh/>. Accessed on 19 November 2018.

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CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I wish to provide an overview of the work in terms of its main arguments and from a sceptical perspective. Candour might serve as a necessary starting point in this task. To that end, I would like to begin by acknowledging the possibility that not all of the points made in this book have hit their mark. In subjecting the notion of community to academic scrutiny, for instance, I have examined how it is prone to change over time, is supplementary in nature and is imagined in character. A reader's experience of community might fly in the face of this contention, and they might experience an earnest sense of pride and proximity to individuals with whom they feel a profound sense of attachment. What I have done in this work is merely provided the analytical groundwork upon which the comparison between different communities might be based; understanding the constituent ingredients of one community allows for entry into dialogue with others, even theoretically. Another element of this critique is that the work includes too many informants (or too few), rendering the work either an anecdotal or an all-too-subjective piece. Wherever one might land concerning the necessity or extent of the inclusion of non-academic voices, this work's primary goal remains reaping the fruits of putting many different people from many different disparate contexts into dialogue. Rather than attempting to further anticipate a litany of possible criticisms, this final chapter's aim is to provide an invitation to think differently about the claims made throughout this work.

Identity is not a simple construct, and the many tricky issues that are attached to it have been laid bare in Chapter 2 of this work. There remains an apparentness to identity nonetheless, one evident even in the introductory vignette about the Blarney Stone. There seems to be an abiding ‘you are what you are’ quality to identity that has so successfully concealed itself that it troubles how we might go about unearthing the composite elements of who we are or might become. Identity is so close to us that it can profoundly limit who we claim to be. Irish people are Irish because they belong to this or that community in Ireland, and Irish people are European because of either their economic interdependence with Europe or their shared historical past. These three contentions have required three chapter-length treatments, each time what has been involved is the close scrutinisation of one element of the claim that troubles and problematises it. These understandings, these conceptual-metaphorical knee-jerk contentions foreclose and pave over what are really thorny issues that elude simple observations.

For instance, our identity cannot be understood as one thing if it concerns and touches on many things, as we have seen, the takeaway of which might be that we can undercut the felt-necessity to say complicated things about ourselves. Irish people are not simply European by dint of belonging to the EU, instead they should be thought to have become that way. If we take this claim at face value, we might learn to be more mindful of claims that eclipse an interesting history in favour of a reductive, syntagmatic view. Finally, you might feel as though ‘history’ alone is a sufficient justification for Ireland’s connection to Belgium, and this is certainly valid. Again, the only caveat I would add is the anthropological concern for the different ways in which history is placed, how it is commemorated and who has a vested interest in its telling.

There is also the possibility that the Irish language has been afforded too much importance in this analysis, given that fewer than one in fifty people speak it in Ireland on a daily basis and outside of a classroom setting. This might be the case, but it afforded me as a researcher an opportunity to carry out fieldwork in spaces in which I would not have been welcome otherwise. It also allowed me to come into contact with a huge contingent of students who have a sincere and profoundly felt connection to the language and to the culture and into contact with fluent Irish speakers who themselves are not Irish. I wholeheartedly reject the notion that the Irish language can be one people group’s alone and examining

how other people speak Irish has allowed for the examination of the very nature of difference itself. An examination of the Irish community alone, as a thing apart from the region in which it is based, is missing a key feature. There is a huge degree of interactivity that goes along with the concepts and metaphors that we invoke. I have attempted to lend the views that people possess about Ireland some theoretical weight by examining them in terms of imaginaries, a conceptual schema that is changeable, but which helps to condition and formalise how we think. This final component has been helpful in moving away from claims that take the format of 'things are just how they appear' by highlighting the frequently overlooked imagined component thereof.

This work has provided an invitation to take what we know and to think differently about it by taking the example of the Irish community in Belgium as its departure point. How we belong, our identity, our community and our language are all central concerns here. Moreover, what these notions allow us to further investigate is crucial. Through the four aforementioned topics, more or less, we have examined film, philosophy, history and literature and, most importantly, we have entertained the claims made by the people who reside in this context about these topics. Forgetting the complexity of things, or by not caring about their complexity or execution, allows us to make all-too-simple claims. This can be shown by observing how often we have examined the issue of how and whether or not someone is Irish throughout this work. The diaspora has also provided an excellent entry point into examinations of this kind, given its forgotten/remembered quality; by this I mean the manner in which the Irish Diaspora can be forgotten about, requiring a Gathering to bring them home, and remain connected in memory and through nostalgic invocation.

In closing, and for a final time, I wish to turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze whose thinking I have spent a great deal of effort attempting to salvage in anthropology's name. The forgetting mentioned in the previous paragraph is perfectly illustrated in the example of the imaginary of what an island is, something which is frequently forgotten:

That England is populated will always come as a surprise; humans can live on an island only by forgetting what an island represents... It is no longer the island that is separated from the continent, it is humans who find themselves separated from the world when on an island. It is no longer

the island that is created from the bowels of the earth through the liquid depths, it is humans who create the world anew from the island and on the waters. (Deleuze 2004: 9)

The island of Ireland still retains a strong dominion in the realm of authentication over its worldwide community, whose composition is over ten times as high as its own. In this way, it is very much an island that is separated from the continent, a feat achieved by forgetting what an island represents. What this has meant is that efforts taken in many fields, such as European integration, Irish language acquisition, the consumption of Irish-related consumer goods, a strong relation with a historical past and the aqueous interplay of mobility and place which has occurred for time immemorial all seem to fall prey to a forgetting and have to be retrieved. This retrieval, or reconstruction, occurs at every level in the context of Belgium. Only when different voices are entertained, at the many scales to which this work has attempted to speak, might Ireland be considered as anything other than that over which it attempts to retain a monopoly of sorts. This effort would spark and foster new becomings, and new lines of differentiation being drawn, but it remains an effort that is anthropological, human-centric to the core. It would also serve as a vivid reminder of the fact that one small community abroad can serve to draw our attention to renewed understandings of ourselves and of our shared humanity.

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